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Latest Air Force scandal: cheating

34 nuclear launch officers suspected of sharing proficiency test answers

BY JON HARPER
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — On Wednesday, the Air Force's top civilian and military leaders revealed that 34 nuclear missile launch officers were involved in a cheating scandal surrounding proficiency tests conducted last year at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Mont. The 34 personnel constitute about 18 percent of the missile officers stationed there.

"There was cheating that took place with respect to this particular test," new Air Force Secretary Deborah James told reporters at the Pentagon. "Some officers did it. Others apparently knew about it, and it appears that they did nothing, or at least not enough to stop it or to report it. Now this is absolutely unacceptable behavior and it is completely contrary to our core values in the Air Force."

"Cheating or tolerating others who cheat runs counter to ev-

erything we believe in as a service," Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh said. "People at every level will be held accountable if and where appropriate."

Over the weekend, the Air Force's Office of Special Investigation found evidence that a missile launch officer from the 341st Missile Wing at Malmstrom texted answers to monthly missile launch officer proficiency tests to 16 other officers.

SEE CHEATING ON PAGE 2

'Cheating or tolerating others who cheat runs counter to everything we believe in as a service.'

Gen. Mark Welsh
Air Force chief of staff

EUROPEAN TERRORISM | PAGE 4



An ambulance leaves the site of a bomb blast that tore through a trolleybus, background, in the city of Volgograd, Russia, last month. A series of unexplained killings in southern Russia involving booby-trapped bombs has further heightened security fears ahead of next month's Winter Olympics in Sochi.

AP

Iraq seeks weapons from US, plans to ask for training

BY LOVEDAY MORRIS
The Washington Post

BAGHDAD — Iraq has provided Washington with a list of weapons it needs to wrest back control from anti-government and al-Qaida-linked militants in restive Anbar province, Prime

Minister Nouri al-Maliki said Thursday, and soon plans to request counterterrorism training from U.S. forces.

The United States is working on providing the medium and light weapons, including another shipment of Hellfire missiles, al-

Maliki said in an interview here in the Iraqi capital. He said he submitted the wish list after a phone call with Vice President Biden on Tuesday.

Al-Maliki said he is seeking further U.S. military training for Iraqi forces in either Iraq

or neighboring Jordan, particularly on how to prevent and fight terrorist attacks. Secretary of State John F. Kerry said early this month that the United States was ready to help but would not send troops to assist in battle.

SEE IRAQ ON PAGE 2

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The decay is not cool, not arty-farty."

— Community activist and onetime mayoral candidate Jean Vorkamp, on the proliferation of tours of abandoned factories, churches and schools in Detroit, one of the city's few burgeoning industries

See story on Page 11

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5. 34 nuclear launch officers involved in Air Force cheating scandal

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Iraq: Leader blames Syrian situation for rise in sectarianism

FROM FRONT PAGE

Iraq's military is working with pro-government tribesmen in Anbar province to attempt to secure the cities of Ramadi and Fallujah, which have been seized by the al-Qaida-linked Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. The extremists have been joined by some Sunni tribesmen from the province who oppose the rule of al-Maliki's Shiite-led government.

Unlike Apache helicopters that Iraq has been seeking from the United States for several years, without success, the shipment of lighter weapons does not require approval from Congress. Al-

Maliki traveled to Washington in November to press for more U.S. military support, but the recent crisis in Anbar has added urgency to his efforts.

The prime minister said he is "satisfied that we will achieve victory against al-Qaida." But he also cautioned that the situation here is complicated and intertwined with the bitter sectarian conflict in neighboring Syria. "The whole region's events are connected," he said. "To solve the problem in Iraq, we cannot look at it in isolation from the other events in the region."

The fall of Fallujah and Ramadi came during a pivotal period

for Iraq, just months before parliamentary elections, which al-Maliki said he expects to proceed on time.

Anbar, a majority Sunni province in a largely Shiite country, was the scene of regular protests in 2013, with residents and tribesmen complaining of sectarianism in state institutions.

Meanwhile, near-daily bombings have blighted Baghdad, making 2013 the worst year for violence since 2008, according to United Nations figures.

Al-Maliki said the problem of sectarianism in Iraq had been resolved in 2008 and 2009, but it was reintroduced as al-Qaida gained

a foothold as a result of spillover from the Syrian civil war. He said the Sunni violence has been "exported" to Iraq by another Arab country, an apparent jab at Saudi Arabia.

Al-Maliki said he had no regrets in forcing U.S. troops to leave Iraq in 2011, despite the situation that has unfolded in Anbar since then. Republicans in the U.S. Senate, including John McCain, of Arizona, and Lindsey Graham, of South Carolina, said last week that if al-Maliki had permitted some troops to stay in the country, the situation in Anbar would be better today.

Cheating: Official says flap not a failure of nuclear mission

FROM FRONT PAGE

"We subsequently approached the entire missile crew force at Malmstrom and 17 other officers who self-admitted to at least being aware of material that had been shared," Welsh said. "We don't yet know how or if each of those officers used that material, but we do know that none of them reported the incident to their leadership."

Welsh said he is not aware of a cheating scandal this large in the history of the missile force.

All 34 involved have been de-certified as launch officers. They are restricted from missile crew duty and their security clearances have been suspended.

The OSI investigation into their individual involvement and the overall cheating scandal will continue, Welsh said. The officers vary in rank from second lieutenant to captain.

The Malmstrom wing failed a nuclear security inspection last August due to "a problem in a security scenario," but the failure was not related to carrying out operational procedures, Welsh said.

On Wednesday, the commander of Global Strike Command, which

oversees the Air Force's nuclear enterprise, ordered a proficiency test be administered to all missile crewmembers in all three of the nation's nuclear missile wings in the wake of the cheating at Malmstrom. As of Wednesday afternoon, about 20 percent of the entire missile crew force had taken the test, and 97 percent of them passed. There were three failures. The 97 percent pass rate matches historical averages, according to Welsh.

James said the testing of the entire force will be completed by the end of the day Thursday.

When asked about the motivation behind the cheating, Welsh said: "It's hard to cover up incompetence cheating one time on a test. When you're going to have a monthly simulator with two instructors watching you actually conduct the practical application of this knowledge in a simulator, you can't hide that."

And so whether it's to get a better score on a test or I just—I'd be speculating as to what it is, but I don't believe it's incompetence," Welsh said.

The cheating took place in August and September, according to officials.

"We have no indications or evidence that it has occurred since just started," Welsh said.

James and Welsh will travel ahead of schedule to all of the ICBM bases next week. The other two are at F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyo., and Minot Air Force Base, N.D.

"Secretary James and I will personally visit all of our missile bases ... next week to ensure that our airman have no question

about our expectations of those who perform this vital mission," Welsh said.

Last week, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel visited F.E. Warren to talk to ICBM launch officers following reports of low morale and poor performance among the nation's missile crews.

"I want to talk also about continuing to hone our skills — our personal skills, our institutional skills, on focusing on our professionalism and how we handle our day-to-day responsibilities," Hagel told the airmen Jan. 9. "You've ... chosen a profession where there's no room for error. In what you do every day, there is no room for error. None."

This cheating scandal comes on the heels of revelations in recent days that three missile launch officers at Malmstrom and F.E. Warren were implicated in an illegal narcotics investigation. Eight personnel at other Air Force bases have been implicated as well.

The cheating at Malmstrom came to light during the course of the narcotics investigation this past weekend, Welsh said. Two of the 34 launch officers involved in the cheating scandal at Malmstrom also are involved in the drug scandal, Air Force officials said.

The narcotics scandal first came to light during Hagel's visit to F.E. Warren.

James acknowledged that the missile force faces personnel problems.

"I've heard that we have quality concerns about people. I'm also hearing that there are top-notch people," she said. "And my

guess is the truth is somewhere in between, but this is a force that needs attention. It is a top priority."

The Air Force leaders told reporters that the personnel issues don't pose a threat to the nuclear enterprise.

"I have great confidence in the security and the effectiveness of our ICBM force," James said. "This was a failure of some of our airmen. It was not a failure of the nuclear mission."

"This is not about the compromise of nuclear weapons," Welsh said. "It's about compromise of the integrity of some of our airmen."

Hagel was briefed on the cheating scandal Wednesday.

"Secretary Hagel was deeply troubled to learn of these allegations, and he strongly supports the aggressive steps the Air Force is taking in response to them," Pentagon Press Secretary Rear Adm. John Kirby said in a statement Wednesday.

Welsh suggested that punishment will continue to be meted out to those who violate standards of conduct.

"Our actions as we move forward will be about making sure that every member of our Air Force understands that we will not accept or allow that type of behavior, that there is nothing more important to the nation than the integrity and the trustworthiness of the people who defend it, and that anyone who doesn't understand that should find another line of work," Welsh said.

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MIDEAST



Courtesy of the U.S. Army

U.S. Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, who was captured in Afghanistan in June 2009, has appeared in a new video believed to have been taken within the last month.

Video gives hope to family of GI held in captivity

By JOHN MILLER
AND LOLITA C. BALDOR
The Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho — The family of U.S. Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, who was captured more than four years ago in Afghanistan, says a new video of the soldier believed to have been taken in the last month has bolstered its resolve to bring him home safely to Idaho.

U.S. officials confirmed Wednesday they'd received the video several days ago. They said it shows Bergdahl, now 27, in poorer health than previous footage taken in the years since he went missing in Afghanistan on June 30, 2009.

Bergdahl, from Hailey in central Idaho, is believed held by a group affiliated with the Taliban somewhere in Pakistan.

Irregular releases like this showing Bergdahl and his captors have offered hope for his parents their son will eventually be freed. The latest footage is no different, Bob and Jani Bergdahl said in a statement Wednesday.

"Naturally, this is very important to us and our resolve to continue our efforts to bring Bowe home as soon as possible," their statement said. "As we have done so many times over the past four and a half years, we request his captors to release him safely so that our only son can be reunited with his mother and father."

Bergdahl's parents have dedicated themselves full-time to doing what they can from thousands of miles away to secure his freedom.

Bob Bergdahl has grown a long, thick beard and sought to learn Pashto, the language spoken by his captors.

Though he has largely shunned interviews with the media, he has become a frequent presence on Internet social media sites

including Twitter, where he has posted hundreds of entries on issues connected to the U.S. war in Afghanistan, drone strikes in the region — and his son, including a tweet Wednesday afternoon.

"If you see this, continue to remain strong through patience," Bob Bergdahl wrote. "Your endurance will carry you to the finish line. Breathe!"

Bergdahl's family has been forced to remain patient, too.

So far, nothing has come of the Taliban's

'We request his captors to release him safely so that our only son can be reunited with his mother and father.'

parents of U.S. Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl

donating a diplomatic approach while renewing its vow to fight Afghan President Hamid Karzai's government.

Even so, residents of Hailey, where Bowe Bergdahl spent most of his first 23 years before enlisting in the Army, continue to adorn the resort town's trees and utility poles with yellow ribbons, to keep him in their minds.

The U.S. officials who confirmed the video footage Wednesday were not authorized to publicly discuss the matter and spoke on condition of anonymity.

US war on Afghan drugs in peril amid force withdrawal

By CHRIS CARROLL
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — U.S. counternarcotics efforts in Afghanistan are in a "perilous state" despite billions of dollars spent to combat the spread of drug production there, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction John Sopko told Congress on Wednesday.

Afghanistan is the world's leading source of opium, and opium production is the primary funding source for Taliban operations in the country, officials said in a hearing of the Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control.

The situation is worsening as the United States and NATO prepare for the official end of combat operations on Dec. 31, Sopko told members of the Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control.

"The situation in Afghanistan is dire with little prospect for improvement in 2014 or beyond," according to Sopko's written statement to Senate panel. "Afghan farmers are growing more opium poppies today than at any time in their modern history."

Poppy cultivation hit a record level in 2013, with 209,000 hectares — or about 516,000 acres — devoted to growing the picturesque red flowers that provide the base ingredient for opiate drugs, including heroin, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. That's a 36 percent increase over 2012.

The UN Office of Drugs and Crime estimates the value of opium and its heroin and morphine derivatives produced in Afghanistan in 2013 at nearly \$3 billion — an increase of 50 percent compared with 2012, Sopko said. James Capra, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's chief of operations, told the panel Wednesday that rising drug production means 'Taliban income is on the rise.'

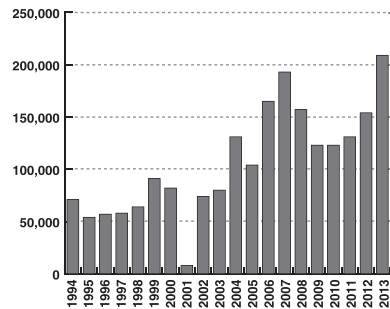
"The Taliban receives millions annual from narcotics-related activity" by taxing growers and producers, Capra said. That increases the insurgents' ability to provoke instability elsewhere in the region, he said.

Erin Logan, principal director of the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Counter-

A growing problem

Despite some \$7 billion spent on counternarcotics efforts since the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom, poppy cultivation across Afghanistan continues to expand, with the 2013 yield being the highest on record.

Hectares (One hectare is roughly 2.5 acres)



Note: The report expresses the 2009-13 amounts with a 95 percent confidence interval; a statistics term that acknowledges a small likelihood of error.

SOURCE: UNODC, 'Afghanistan Opium Survey 2013: Summary Findings,' 11/2013

Stars and Stripes

narcotics and Global Threats, said heroin abuse is a growing problem in the United States, and the Department of Defense is intent on "disrupting the flow of these drugs as far away from our shores as possible."

The United States has poured vast sums of money into an effort to fight the problem since the beginning of the war in Afghanistan, Sopko reported.

"Since 2002, the United States has spent at least \$7 billion on a wide variety of programs to reduce poppy cultivation, prevent narcotics production, treat drug addiction, and improve the criminal justice system to combat drug trafficking," according to his written testimony. "The United States has provided another \$3 billion for agriculture and stabilization programs, which under the current U.S. strategy are considered an important part of the counternarcotics effort."

Caucus chairwoman Sen. Diane Feinstein, D-Calif., said the Senate body has produced several

draft recommendations to combat the problem. Among them are increased international drug enforcement cooperation with countries that consume large amounts of Afghan opium, including Russia and Iran, and efforts to provide economic alternatives to poppy production for rural Afghans and greater support for Afghan government anti-drug enforcement.

The consequences of failure could be grim, Sopko told Congress. During his recent trips to Afghanistan, he said, residents have laid out two possible outcomes for the country after the U.S. and NATO withdraw combat troops: a successful modern state or an insurgent state.

He said that because of the growing drug trade "there is a third possibility: a narco-criminal state. Absent effective counternarcotics programs and Afghan political will to seriously tackle this grave problem, that third outcome may become a reality."

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US planning drug intel center in Bahrain

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — As the United States shrinks its civilian presence in Afghanistan, limiting its ability to combat the country's booming drug industry, U.S. officials intend to establish an intelligence center in Bahrain to continue fighting the trade.

The center in the tiny Persian Gulf nation, home to the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet, will be an "integral part" of the Defense Department's post-2014 strategy in Afghanistan, Erin Logan, who oversees the Pentagon's counternarcotics efforts, said Wednesday

afternoon.

"The center will help fill the gap where space for personnel on the ground in Afghanistan is no longer available," she told a Senate panel on narcotics control.

Lawmakers and the inspector general overseeing reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan said they were alarmed that a problem that Washington has spent billions of dollars trying to combat is likely to worsen and further destabilize Afghanistan at a critical time.

DEA agents hope to continue working with and supporting elite

Afghan police units that have carried out drug investigations in recent years, Capra said.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., chairman of the counter-narcotics panel, called Afghanistan's drug trade a problem with "no easy solution," adding that new approaches must be found. "We ignore it at our peril," she said.

Feinstein said Washington should attempt to collaborate on counternarcotics efforts with Iran, which shares a border with Afghanistan and is a leading destination and crossing point of the heroin trade.

EUROPEAN TERRORISM

Sochi was target of terrorism long before Olympics

Concerns fanned by latest incidents as start of Winter Games approaches

By JOSH SMITH
Stars and Stripes

MOSCOW — The snow-covered train station appears peaceful, for just a moment, in a grim surveillance video. Then a sudden explosion smashes the station's windows and shatters that peace, along with the lives of dozens more civilians caught in the crossfire of Russia's long war against terrorism.

The deadly explosion Dec. 29 in the southern Russian city of Volgograd — made famous during World War II under its Soviet name of Stalingrad — was not the first, nor was it the last, deadly attack in the area.

That blast, set off by a suspected suicide bomber, was followed a day later by another alleged suicide attack on a trolleybus. Together, the two attacks left as many as 34 people dead and dozens wounded, sending the city into shock. Two months earlier, in October, a suicide bomber killed six people on a Volgograd bus.

No group took responsibility, but investigators said the bombers came from the troubled North Caucasus region.

With the start of the Winter Olympics in Sochi on Feb. 6, the latest strikes in Russia have been front-page news in the West and have fanned concerns that the Games could be a prime target of a terrorist attack.

While the level of media attention may be new, the threat certainly isn't. By one estimate, Russia has been the victim of nearly 2,000 terrorist attacks since 1992, the year after the Soviet Union collapsed. Volgograd is only the latest in a long list of cities to be targeted.

The messy wars against separatist Chechnya in the 1990s sparked a wave of terrorism, from bombings in southern Russia to hostage-takings in the heart of Moscow.

That experience in dealing with Islamic terrorism at home is shaping Moscow's policies regarding Syria, Iran and elsewhere in the Middle East and Asia — and may define Russia's relationship with the West for years to come.

An epidemic

When Anatoly Ermolin left his job in 1996 as a lieutenant colonel in the KGB's elite special operations team, he thought his days in

the fight against terrorism were over. In his decade with the unit, he fought in the Soviet Union's dirty wars, from Azerbaijan to Afghanistan, hunting down people seen as threats to the crumbling communist empire. In the last years of his service, he led an anti-terrorism squad in North Ossetia and Ingushetia, two Russian republics that would soon become battlegrounds between government forces and militant groups.

After the Soviet Union ceased to exist in 1991, the KGB team was subordinated to Russia's domestic police service — a move seen as an attempt to strip it of its powers. Ermolin hung up his gun and got a job developing educational policies for a private school funded by Mikhail Khodorkovsky, the one-time oil tycoon who was recently released from prison. Ermolin's past in the dark world of Soviet special forces faded.

Ten years later, he found himself confronting domestic terrorism again. By then he was a member of Russia's State Duma,



“Terrorism cannot be a local problem; it is not a problem for just one place. It’s not just a problem in Chechnya or Ingushetia, but for the whole world.”

Alexander Khinshteyn
vice chairman of the State Duma's security and anti-corruption committee



PHOTOS BY JOSH SMITH/Stars and Stripes

Russian riot police observe a protest by Russian nationalist groups in Moscow in November. Economic and political problems continue to inflame ethnic tensions and exacerbate the threat of terrorism.

where he sat on the foreign affairs committee, observing some of the most devastating terrorist attacks in Russian history.

About that time, the response to Moscow's brutal campaign in the 1990s to pacify the breakaway republic of Chechnya was reaching the capital with a vengeance.

In late 2002, Chechen rebels held 700 people captive in a Moscow theater until security forces stormed in. Most of the 129 hostages who were killed died from the effects of gas used by police.

The year 2004 saw lethal assaults on the Moscow metro, government buildings and two passenger jets, which were blown up. The most deadly incident occurred at the end of the year, when Chechen rebels seized a school in Beslan, North Ossetia. More than 300 hostages — half of them children — died during the assault and the botched rescue.

Spurred by those attacks and the fallout, Ermolin wrote a letter to President Vladimir Putin, also a veteran of the KGB, explaining why he thought the country's counterterrorism policies had gone off the rails.

As a KGB officer he had used the very same kinds of ruthless tactics that Russia had recently employed in the North Caucasus, but he was now making the case that such methods were counterproductive.

“It was trying to explain the nature of terrorism in Russia, and the main idea was that we have a problem, we have an epidemic,” Ermolin told Stars and Stripes as he sipped tea in his Moscow office. Having left the Duma in 2007, he now works as a project director for the Committee of Civic Initiatives, an organization that tries to boost participation in public affairs.

“One of the most dangerous factors was the way we started to fight terrorism,” he said. “The

result is hundreds of people who will fight to the death.”

Putin's press office did not respond to a request for comment.

The incredible level of extremist violence in Russia is important in understanding the country's counterterrorism strategy, said Tom Nichols, a professor of National Security Affairs at the U.S. Naval War College.

“This has made the Russians — who already are used to a strong state security apparatus — far more willing to empower its internal security forces beyond anything Americans would ever allow,” he said. “While the Russian campaigns in Chechnya in the 1990s were brutal, I think this long ago mutated into a larger civilizational conflict. Terrorism is never justified.”

Fertile ground

Though the North Caucasus have become synonymous in Russia with terrorism, some fear the same combination of economic and political problems that made Chechnya a magnet for religious extremists could make other regions of the country vulnerable to violence.

Kazan, the capital city of the Republic of Tatarstan, lies 650 miles up the Volga River from Volgograd, deep in the heart of Russia.

It is known for its ethnic and religious diversity. The population is split almost evenly between ethnic Russians and mostly Muslim Tatars, and the city's fortress is a UNESCO World Heritage Site that features a mosque and a Russian Orthodox cathedral.

Below the surface, however, there are signs of tension.

Local Russian nationalist groups protest over perceived Tatar dominance, and in the city's recently constructed subway, it's clear officials aren't

taking any chances. Commuters must have their bags scanned by security guards at every station — a precaution not taken even in Moscow's crowded transportation system.

The good news, said Mark Galeotti, a professor of global affairs at New York University, is that “the Wahhabi-Salafi-jihadist strain of Islam is pretty alien” to most of the Muslim traditions in Russia. “Although there is some risk of spread into Tatarstan, on the whole I wouldn't be too alarmist.”

The Council of Muftis of Russia, a leading Muslim organizing committee, condemned the latest Volgograd attacks and opened an account to raise funds for the victims.

“Islam condemns the killing of innocent people and has no relation to the terrible crimes committed by terrorists hiding behind our religion,” the council said in a statement on its website.

While the tensions in areas like Tatarstan have mostly been limited to long-standing political and economic rivalries between various ethnic and religious blocs, events in recent years have raised concerns that the issues could be co-opted by violent extremists.

In July 2012, the city was rattled by its first terrorist attack, which targeted two pro-Kremlin Muslim leaders who had condemned more radical members of the faith. A few months later, one police officer and three militants accused of involvement in the attacks were killed in a gunbattle in a Kazan apartment complex.

Last year, Russian prosecutors announced they were treating the burning of seven Orthodox Christian churches in the area as terrorism committed by unspecified extremists.

SEE SOCHI ON PAGE 5

EUROPEAN TERRORISM

Sochi: The Kremlin determined to make favorable impression in these Winter Games

FROM PAGE 4

The fears aren't limited to Kazan. Analysts say economic and political malaise in much of Russia has led to simmering ethnic tensions, in some cases causing riots and other unrest. Russian nationalists, many of whom openly and proudly call themselves racist, rioted in Moscow last year during protests against ethnic minorities and migrants.

Concerns over terrorism have come to a head as Russia prepares to host the Winter Olympics next month. Sochi, the resort town in which the Games will be based, is just west of the northern Caucasus, on the Black Sea.

Moscow has a lot riding on the event. The Kremlin has invested billions in infrastructure, and it is determined to make a favorable impression. The humiliation of the 1980 Moscow Summer Games — boycotted by the U.S. and 61 other countries because of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan — has not been forgotten.

Some of the security efforts leading up to the Sochi Games have raised eyebrows, however.

After the October bus attack in Volgograd, Russian officials are reported to be collecting DNA samples pre-emptively from religiously conservative Muslim women. A plan by security services to monitor the communications of everyone at the Games made headlines.

While analysts say Russian forces have become better at avoiding the mass casualties that marked counterterrorism efforts a decade ago, they say that Moscow has failed to address many of the root causes

of discontent.

Russia's crackdown in Chechnya "galvanized jihadism in the region," Galeotti said, but there are a range of economic and political issues that have allowed the area to become a fertile ground for extremists bringing a religious flavor to the unrest in the Caucasus and other regions of southern Russia.

"Heavy-handed security measures continue often to be counterproductive, but in many ways Moscow's main failure has been not to address the serious and genuine crises of unemployment, corruption and government illegitimacy in the North Caucasus," he said. "This is what actually provides the jihadist minority with wider legitimacy and popular support."

'Dry wood'

The uprisings across North Africa and the Middle East have been watched warily by Russian officials who fear that such revolutionary sentiments could exacerbate the already inflamed North Caucasus and even spread beyond, Ermolin said. Economic and political issues that have not been addressed make the areas potentially ripe for recruitment of fighters engaged in the war against the Moscow-backed Bashar Assad regime in Syria.

For Russian leaders, the calls by some Syrian rebels for the creation of a fundamentalist Islamic state in their homeland sound uncomfortably similar to the goals of Doku Umarov, the Chechen leader of the so-called Caucasus Emirate. The stated aim of Umarov's group, designated by Moscow and Washington as a terrorist or-

ganization, is to establish an Islamic state on Russian territory.

Chechen fighters like Omar Abu al-Chechen, who leads an expatriate jihadist force known as the Immigrant Brothers in Syria, have sparked fears that the extremists are seeking to make Syria into a base for future operations in Russia.

Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov talked of police measures to deal with that danger when he spoke to reporters in December.

"For Chechnya, this issue is particularly acute due to the fact that Syria has thousands of fighters who, according to Russian special services, are a serious and real threat for our country," said Kadyrov, a former rebel who has been criticized for his human rights record. "We cannot quietly listen to these threats and wait until this plague will move in the direction of Russia."

Referring to the threat posed by extremists, Ermolin said: "I think this is one of the most dangerous things for any government. They are very serious and believe they can organize an Islamic state. And this state would be mostly situated here, not in the United States. They consider it to be their territory."

"We are dry wood; it's very easy to set fire to the situation."

Mutual interests

While the disastrous conflict in Syria has divided Russia and NATO-member countries that initially backed the rebel groups, the increasingly extremist nature of Syria's opposition could see a realignment of international interests.

"There is a fear of it spreading, especially after the fighting stops and militants return to the North Caucasus, perhaps with other jihadist allies, but honestly I think [Russia's] main fear is regional chaos that will empower Iran," said Galeotti.

The situation in the Caucasus captured American attention last year when the two brothers accused of bombing the Boston Marathon were identified as having been born to a family from that area.

Analysts contend that the broader counterterrorism effort is one in which Moscow and Washington could collaborate better. The problem, they say, is that other issues keep getting in the way.

"I have argued for many years that Russia and America have a natural interest in anti-terrorism cooperation, and I think it's unfortunate that so many other issues have interfered in an area where we have a clear coincidence of interests," Nichols said.

Galeotti agreed. "The trouble is that both Russia and the West tend also to try and turn the conflict to their own advantage," he said. "But on an operational level, there is definitely scope for much greater intelligence sharing."

The threats to Russia are not particularly different from those faced by the U.S., said Alexander Khinshtein, vice chairman of the State Duma's security and anti-corruption committee.

"Terrorism cannot be a local problem; it is not a problem for just one place," he said. "It's not just a problem in Chechnya or Ingushetia, but for the whole world."

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MILITARY

Contracting probe led to Navy official's ouster

By CRAIG WHITLOCK
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — An intensifying criminal investigation of a suspected contracting scheme involving a top-secret Navy project has resulted in the forced resignation of the service's second-ranking civilian leader, according to officials and court documents.

Robert Martineage, the acting undersecretary of the Navy, stepped down after his boss, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus, asked for his resignation "following a loss of confidence in [his] abilities to effectively perform his duties," according to a statement the Navy released Wednesday.

Navy officials said Martineage was pressured to resign after investigators looking into his role in the top-secret program discovered that he was having an affair.

Federal prosecutors testified last week in U.S. District Court in Alexandria, Va., that Martineage is not a criminal target of their inquiry. But they said one of his subordinates has told them that Martineage gave approval for a



Martineage

mysterious operation to acquire a large batch of firearm silencers intended for SEAL Team 6, the elite commando unit that killed Osama bin Laden.

In that case, three senior Navy intelligence officials who reported to Martineage are under investigation for a suspected contracting scheme that charged the military \$1.6 million for homemade silencers that cost only \$8,000 to manufacture, court records show.

The untraceable silencers were purchased from a hot-rod auto mechanic who is a brother of one of the Navy intelligence officials under scrutiny. The mechanic, Mark Landersman, of Temecula, Calif., has been charged with conspiracy to commit wire fraud and

to transport unregistered firearms. His attorneys have denied the charges.

Prosecutors said in court last week that the silencers were acquired for a "special access program," or a highly secretive military operation. One document filed in the case said the silencers were needed to support "the UP-STAIRS program," but does not give details.

Many aspects of the investigation have been kept under seal or described in closed court sessions. Some details emerged Friday in a rare hearing that was kept open to the public.

In that session, prosecutors said that Lee Hall, one of the three Navy intelligence officials

under investigation, recently told them that Martineage had given oral approval for the purchase of the silencers.

Prosecutors said they have interviewed Martineage but did not reveal his version of events. Martineage is not a target of the criminal investigation, said Morris Parker Jr., an assistant U.S. attorney and the lead prosecutor in the case.

Martineage, who has a background in special operations and intelligence, had been serving as acting undersecretary of the Navy since April. He also held the title of deputy undersecretary of the Navy for plans, policy, oversight and integration. Martineage did not return a phone message seeking comment.

Report: Systemic failures led to Benghazi attacks

By KIMBERLY DOZIER
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A bipartisan Senate report on the attacks on the diplomatic compound in Benghazi, Libya, paints a picture of systemic failure of security for U.S. diplomats overseas that led to the deaths of the ambassador to Libya and three other Americans.

The intelligence community didn't send enough warnings, the State Department didn't take

the warnings it did get seriously enough, and the military was caught flat-footed when called on to rescue those in need, according to a long-delayed Senate Intelligence Committee report released Wednesday.

U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens, information technology specialist Sean Smith and CIA security contractors Tyrone Woods and Glen Doherty died in the attacks that took place Sept. 11-12, 2012.

The report goes so far as to say the attacks could have been pre-

vented if the State Department had accepted security on offer from the military or had closed the Benghazi facility until it could have been better secured.

The report for the first time points specifically to Stevens for twice refusing the U.S. military's offer to keep a special operations team there that was providing extra security in the weeks before the attacks.

On the 11th anniversary of the 2001 terror attacks, armed militants stormed the diplomatic

outpost in Benghazi, setting the building on fire, and later attacked the CIA annex where the Americans had taken shelter.

The Obama administration first described the attacks as a spontaneous mob protest of an anti-Islamic, American-made video, like the one at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo earlier that day. Administration officials corrected their description days after the attacks, but by then the incident had become a hot political issue.

The report also takes the U.S.

intelligence community to task for not seeking out eyewitness reports after the attacks and not quickly correcting erroneous reports to administration officials that the attacks might have been sparked by the video.

The intelligence community later blamed the violence on militants.

The report says the subsequent investigation showed individuals from many al-Qaida-linked militant groups took part in the "opportunistic" attacks.

Intelligence Committee Republicans slam Joint Chiefs chairman

By JON HARPER
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Republican members of the Senate Intelligence Committee singled out Gen. Martin Dempsey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, for exhibiting poor leadership and insufficient planning in their report on the September 2012 attacks on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi.

The full committee on Wednesday released a declassified report on the attacks by al-Qaida-linked militants that killed four Americans, including U.S. Ambassador to Libya Christopher Stevens.

"The tenure of ... General Martin Dempsey, has been marked by what we view as significant deficiencies in command," the report states in the addendum signed by Republican Sens. Saxby Chambliss, Richard Burr, James Risch, Daniel Coats, Marco Rubio and Tom Cotton. "From Syria to Benghazi, there has been either a profound inability or clear unwillingness to identify and prevent problems before they arise. Given the known operating environment in Benghazi, much less North Africa, a strong military leader would have ensured there was a viable plan in place to rescue Americans should the need arise."

The harsh assessment of Dempsey divides the committee along partisan lines, Republican Sen. Susan Collins was the only

Republican on the committee who did not sign off on the addendum, and none of the committee Democrats took part in the attacks on the chairman.

In congressional hearings held in the wake of the Benghazi attack, Dempsey and other senior defense officials argued that a rescue operation was not feasible after the attacks began due to poor intelligence about the situation on the ground and a lack of sufficient quick-response military assets in the region that could have gotten to Benghazi in time to save those who died.

"General Dempsey's attempts to excuse inaction by claiming that forces were not deployed because they would not have gotten there in time does not pass the common sense test," the Republican committee members said. "No one knew when the attacks against our facilities in Benghazi would end, or how aggressive the attacks would be. That is the whole point of a pre-established emergency rescue plan — so that the length of the attack alone does not dictate the rescue or survival of Americans."

"General Dempsey should have ensured that plan was in place, but he failed to do so ...

"The fate of United States personnel serving in dangerous areas of the world should not rest on ad hoc rescue operations, no matter how heroic, simply because the

United States Government and its civilian and military leaders have failed in their collective responsibilities to provide security and potentially life-saving assistance."

The GOP also blames Dempsey for failing to inform U.S. Africa Command, which is responsible for operations in Libya, about the existence of the CIA Annex and intelligence personnel in Benghazi.

"We are puzzled as to how the military leadership expected to effectively respond and rescue Americans in the event of an emergency when it did not even know of the existence of one of the U.S. facilities," the senators said.

The Republicans on the committee placed the ultimate blame for the loss of American lives in Benghazi on Hillary Clinton, who was in charge of the State Department at the time.

"The final responsibility for security at diplomatic facilities lies with the former Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton," they said. "The Temporary Mission Facility in Benghazi did not meet the security standards set by the State Department ... At the end of the day, she was responsible for ensuring the safety of all Americans serving in our diplomatic facilities. Her failure to do so clearly made a difference in the lives of the four murdered Americans and their families."

Cmdr. Scott McInay, a spokes-

man for the Joint Staff, issued the following statement to Stars and Stripes when asked to respond to the committee members' criticism of Dempsey:

"The Chairman has testified before Congress multiple times on the military response to the attacks in Benghazi that claimed the lives of Ambassador Stevens, Tyrone Woods, Glen Doherty and Sean Smith. Our forces were ordered to respond upon notification of the attack. But the fact remains, as we have repeatedly indicated, that U.S. military forces could not have arrived in time to mount a rescue of those Americans who were killed and injured that night."

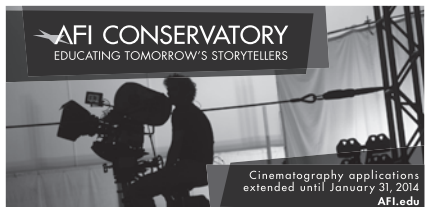
The full committee report offered a similar assessment.

"There were no U.S. military resources in position to intervene in short order in Benghazi to help

defend the Temporary Mission Facility and its Annex on September 11 and 12, 2012," the report states. "The small number of U.S. military resources devoted to the vast and often ungoverned North African landscape makes it unlikely that DoD can respond in short periods to all potential crises across North Africa."

Following the Benghazi attacks, the U.S. military set up a Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force to respond to future Benghazi-like scenarios in North Africa. The SP-MAGTF is now based in Moron, Spain. Another new crisis-response force — the East Africa Response Force — has been established to deal with similar crises in other parts of Africa. The EARF is based at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti.

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MILITARY



CAROLYN KASTER/AP

House Armed Services Committee Chairman Rep. Buck McKeon, R-Calif., announced Thursday that he's retiring after 21 years.

Armed services chairman won't seek re-election

By LEO SHANE III
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The next session of Congress will open with two new armed services committee chairmen and plenty of postpartum problems to tackle.

On Thursday, House Armed Services Chairman Buck McKeon, R-Calif., announced he will not seek re-election next fall, ending his 20-year congressional career and opening up the coveted military committee leadership spot.

McKeon had served in that role for the last three years, and as the House education committee chairman for two years before that. Republican rules mandate six-year term limits for committee leadership positions, and he said stepping into a lesser role next session forced him to reassess another run for public office.

Last March, Senate Armed Services Chairman Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., announced his plans to retire at the end of 2014. He has led that committee since 2007, the longest run of any senator since Georgia Democrat Sam Nunn in the early 1990s.

Levin is 79, McKeon 75. Both are stepping away as the Pentagon winds down the war in Afghanistan and girds itself for ongoing funding fights with a Congress focused on deficit reduction.

McKeon wants to avoid being seen as a lame-duck chairman announcing a defense spending efficiency review, plans for several member trips to Afghanistan and a goal of reforming the military's handling of sexual assault cases.

He gave a nod to one potential successor, committee vice chairman Mack Thornberry, R-Texas. The 18-year congressman was in the running for the chairmanship

when McKeon was selected, and has made public his desire to take over for McKeon.

"I expect (Thornberry) to run, and I expect him to win," McKeon said. "I think he'd make an excellent chairman."

Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I., is the presumptive replacement for Levin. The Senate Armed Services Committee has outlined similarly ambitious plans for its upcoming year, including a review of the recent military retirement cost-of-living cuts passed as part of a budget deal last month.

Among his accomplishments, McKeon highlighted last month's passage of the annual defense authorization bill. It's the 52nd consecutive year

Congress has passed that military legislation, a record unmatched by any other legislative priority and a point of pride among committee members.

In a statement, the House Armed Services Committee's ranking member, Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., praised McKeon for his bipartisan approach to issues and willingness to engage with political opponents.

"Buck set a tone on this committee should seek to emulate," he said.

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Memorial set for helo crash victims

Stars and Stripes

RAF MILDENHALL, England — A memorial service will be held at RAF Lakenheath on Friday for four airmen who died in a helicopter crash earlier this month.

Capt. Christopher S. Stover, Capt. Sean M. Ruane, Tech. Sgt. Dale E. Mathews and Staff Sgt. Afton M. Ponce, all with the 56th Rescue Squadron, died when

their HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter crashed near the town of Salthouse on Jan. 7.

The service, which is open to identification card holders and some invitees from the local community, will be at 1:56 p.m. in Hangar 7 at Lakenheath, according to posts on the base's Facebook page.

A spokesman for Lakenheath

said odd times for ceremonies often reflect the number of the unit involved.

A large turnout from Lakenheath and RAF Mildenhall is expected, and attendees are asked to arrive early, according to a Facebook post.

An investigation into the crash is ongoing.

news@stripes.com

Remains found on Japan base still unidentified

Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Human remains found last month on Camp Foster appear to be those of an unidentified Japanese male, according to Okinawa prefecture police.

The decomposing body was discovered Dec. 18 in the Futenna family housing area, a section of Camp Foster with many vacant and deteriorating buildings that are to be returned to Okinawa for

redevelopment.

After an initial investigation, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service turned the case over to Japanese police, who have so far been unable to identify the man or his cause of death.

The body showed no obvious signs of violence or injury, police said. Investigators posted a notice in local newspapers requesting information on the man's identity but received no responses.

Navy investigating possible fuel leak in Hawaii

The Associated Press

HONOLULU — Navy officials said Wednesday night they're investigating a possible fuel leak in a tank at an underground facility built in Hawaii in the 1940s.

Navy officials said fuel operators found a discrepancy in the tank's levels Monday. Manual measurements showed the tank possibly lost fuel, the Navy said.

Navy spokesman Tom Clements said it's not clear whether any aviation fuel was truly lost because measurements would take several days to complete. He said he did

not know how much fuel was in the tank, though the 200-foot tall cylinder holds 12.6 million gallons.

When operators found the measurement discrepancy, they began transferring fuel immediately to another tank, a process that could take up to five days, Navy officials said.

The Navy said it informed state and local officials, and nearby wells were closed as a precaution. Local water officials were investigating separately, the Navy said.

The Red Hill Underground Fuel Storage Facility held fuel for

American planes in World War II. It has 20 total tanks that have capacity to store a total of 252 million gallons, buried about 100 feet underground.

The inland facility is about 2 miles north of Pearl Harbor, near a state prison and just east of a freeway that connects Honolulu with the suburb of Kaneohe on Oahu's windward coast.

The Navy started building the facility in 1940, less than one year before the Dec. 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor that propelled the United States into World War II.

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MILITARY

Officer guilty of sex assault will remain in Army

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany — Lt. Col. Brian Lofton, an Army officer assigned to U.S. Special Operations Command Africa, was convicted Wednesday of sexually assaulting a woman at his home in late 2012, but the jury's sentence allowed the 18-year veteran to remain in the service.

At a court-martial in Stuttgart, Lofton was found guilty of violating Article 120 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice in connection with a charge he held the woman down and forcibly kissed her breasts against her will.

The jury sentenced Lofton to a reprimand, a \$1,500 monthly pay forfeiture for one year and a two-month restriction that limits the officer's movements to his home and his duty station. It did not, sentence Lofton to dismissal from the service.

Lofton was acquitted of two other charges: that he digitally penetrated the woman and that he grabbed her buttocks.

Prosecutors argued that allowing a sex offender to remain in the service would send the wrong message to troops, especially female servicemembers, who would likely be alarmed to serve alongside a convicted sex offender.

"Show what military justice can deliver," Army Special Victims Prosecutor Capt. Meghan McEnerny said in her closing statement.

Under pending changes to the UCMJ, sexual offense convictions will automatically mandate dismissal from the service. That was one of the changes prompted by outrage over the case of Lt. Col. James Wilkerson, the former Aviano airman who was convicted of sexual assault and dismissed from the service, only to be reinstated by Lt. Gen. Craig Franklin, the Third Air Force commander. Franklin later announced this month he is retiring in light of the controversy surrounding that decision.

"I think the sentence — no jail, no dismissal — reflects the fact that what happened is out of character, and Lt. Col. Lofton is a good person who deserves the right to continue in his service," said Stephen Carpenter, Lofton's defense attorney.

What happens next, "is an open question," Carpenter said.

During Lofton's court-martial, the 29-year-old woman, a local civilian, testified that after meeting Lofton at a downtown club, she and the Army officer struck up a friendly relationship on Facebook. After a couple of weeks, the two had their first date, which involved an evening of drinks and conversation at Lofton's apartment.

After talking for several hours, Lofton, who had been drinking, was unable to drive the woman home. Lofton offered to either call a taxi or let her spend the night at his apartment. The woman testified she elected to spend the night.

In bed, Lofton began to force himself on her, pinning her down as he kissed and touched her body, the woman testified. Fearing that the assault was going to escalate into rape, the woman yelled that she was infected with HIV, which ended the assault, she said.

"This idea came in my mind and it saved my life," said the woman, speaking in English, who is not HIV-positive. "He didn't touch me anymore."

She then called German police, who soon arrived on the scene and took both the woman and Lofton in for questioning. The case was later handed over to U.S. authorities as is standard with U.S. servicemembers in Germany.

Lofton offered a different account of events, saying that he had engaged in consensual kissing and tickling. At some point, the woman "flipped" and went into a rant about "arrogant Americans" and sex-obsessed men, Lofton said. Lofton said he responded by telling her to get "the (expletive) out of my house."

According to Lofton, that somehow prompted the woman to declare she was HIV-positive.

"She was acting like a crazy person," Lofton said.

Lofton said that while he engaged in consensual kissing with the woman he never assaulted her or touched her breasts or genitalia. Lofton's testimony was contradicted by physical evidence, which matched his DNA to DNA found on the inside cups of the woman's bra.

When asked how it got there, Lofton failed to give an explanation.

In a statement before sentencing, Lofton apologized to the woman and also appealed to the jury that he be allowed to continue serving.

"I still love this Army and everything it stands for," Lofton said. "I just really still want to serve."

During the trial's sentencing phase, several officers who served as character witnesses for Lofton testified that they would be happy to serve with Lofton again despite his being convicted of a sexual offense.

The woman, whose family moved from Kosovo to Germany in the late 1990s, said testifying during the trial was like going through the assault a second time. "I told him to stop and he didn't stop," she told the jury.

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Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Rescue mission refueling

A crew aboard an MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter from Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City, N.C., lands aboard the USS Ross, a 505-foot guided missile destroyer, Tuesday. The Jayhawk was responding to a disabled sailboat with four people aboard 300 miles east of Cape Henry, Va., and needed the Navy platform to refuel before and after the crew hoisted the people from the sailboat into the helicopter.

2 Afghan civilians killed in strike, further straining ties

By HEATH DRUZIN
Stars and Stripes

KABUL — A NATO airstrike aimed at insurgents killed at least two civilians, further straining relations between the U.S. and Afghanistan at a time when the two countries remain at odds over a security agreement that is key to keeping international troops in the country past the end of the year.

The strike occurred Wednesday during a joint NATO and Afghan operation in a Taliban-heavy district of Parwan province, roughly two hours north of Kabul, when coalition and Afghan special operations troops came under heavy fire and called for air support, according to a statement from the NATO-led Afghan Security Assistance Force.

The ISAF statement said Afghan commandos and their ISAF advisers came under fire from two compounds before they killed in the strike, which also killed 10

insurgents.

An ISAF servicemember was killed in the fighting. On Thursday, the Pentagon identified the victim as Sgt. Daniel T. Lee, 28, of Crossville, Tenn., saying he died from wounds suffered when enemy forces attacked his unit with small-arms fire.

Parwan Deputy Governor Shah Wali Shahid said in a phone interview with Stars and Stripes that initial reports indicated seven civilians were killed, including several children in a village called Wazghar.

According to a report in The Washington Post, Afghan President Hamid Karzai said eight civilians were killed in the strike.

The incident happened in Ghorband district, an area that has been under intermittent Taliban control for about two years.

"ISAF regrets any civilian casualties and will continue working with our Afghan partners to determine all the facts surround-

ing this incident," the ISAF statement read.

Civilian casualties have long been a source of tension between Karzai and the U.S., and Karzai has demanded a stop to airstrikes in civilian areas.

Last week, U.S. marines accidentally killed a young boy in Helmand province, according to a Reuters report.

The latest incident comes amid a controversy over the planned release by Afghan authorities of more than 70 prisoners ISAF accuses of planning attacks against coalition and Afghan troops. Washington and Kabul are also still negotiating a bilateral security agreement that would pave the way for a residual international military force, likely to be between 10,000 and 15,000 troops, to stay in Afghanistan past Dec. 31 for a training and counterterrorism mission.

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1 killed in Army helo 'hard landing' in Ga.

SAVANNAH, Ga. — A U.S. military spokesman says one member of an elite Army helicopter unit was killed and two were injured when their aircraft slammed into the ground while trying to land at a Georgia air field.

Maj. Allen Hill said Thursday that the MH-60 Black Hawk was returning from a routine training flight to Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah when it made a "hard landing" late Wednesday on or near the airstrip. The names of the dead and injured soldiers were not immediately released.

The crew belongs to the 160th

Special Operations Aviation Regiment, which trains to fly helicopters behind enemy lines under cover of darkness. Also called the Night Stalkers, the unit has a battalion based in Savannah.

On Jan. 8, a Navy helicopter crashed about 18 miles off Virginia Beach, killing three aboard.

From The Associated Press

NATION

Senate ready to send spending bill to Obama

By ALAN FRAM
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Drained of much of its vitriol over the budget, Congress is poised to adopt a \$1.1 trillion package financing federal agencies this year, a bipartisan compromise that all but banishes the specter of an election-year government shutdown.

The Democratic-controlled Senate planned to give final congressional approval to the immense spending measure, possibly as early as Thursday. The Republican-run House passed the package Wednesday in a lopsided 359-67 vote that underscored how both parties could claim wins in the measure — and how both saw deep perils in fighting over it.

"Not everyone will like everything in this bill," said Rep. Hal Rogers, R-Ky., the House Appropriations Committee chairman. Rogers and his Senate counterpart, Sen. Barbara Mikulski, D-Md., were the chief authors. "That's the nature of compromise."

The legislation is a line-by-line follow-up to the budget compromise the two parties pushed through Congress in December that set overall spending limits for the next two years.

The bill lawmakers were considering this week finances federal agencies through September. With the November congressional elections coming just weeks later, Congress is all but sure to provide more money later to avoid an

Highlights of the \$1.1 trillion in spending measure

■ **Overall.** For basic agency operations — excluding the costs of war and natural disasters — the \$1.1 trillion includes about \$30 billion less than Congress originally provided for last year. It is about \$20 billion more than was provided after automatic spending cuts called the sequester took effect for 2013. The total prevents \$45 billion in sequester cuts legally required for this year because of the failure of President Barack Obama and Congress to agree to previous budget savings.

■ **War and disasters.** Provides \$92 billion for U.S. military operations overseas this year — mostly in Afghanistan — and nearly \$7 billion for disasters. That's about \$1 billion less than last year for war and \$44 billion less for disasters, when Hurricane Sandy drove up that price tag.

■ **Defense.** Provides \$487 billion, excluding war costs. Includes money for 1 percent pay raise requested by Obama. Cuts operation and maintenance to \$160 billion, \$14 billion below last year's enacted level. Cuts equipment procurement and research and development programs. Provides requested \$157 million for Sexual Assault and Prevention Office.

■ **Military retirees.** Exempts wounded military personnel who retire early, and their surviving spouses, from cuts in the annual inflation increases to their benefits.

■ **Health care law.** Funded at lower levels than the administration wanted, including retaining last year's \$3.7 billion for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which oversees the program. Cuts \$1 billion from Prevention and Public Health Fund.

■ **Health research.** \$29.9 billion for the National Institutes of Health, \$1 billion more than the final amount provided for last year.

■ **Guantanamo.** Prohibits transferring detainees from

the American naval prison in Cuba to the United States.

■ **Transportation.** No money for high-speed rail, an Obama-backed initiative. The Federal Aviation Administration's \$12.4 billion budget is nearly \$200 million below last year.

■ **Domestic security.** Holds Transportation Security Administration budget to \$4.9 billion, more than \$200 million below last year. Limits that agency to having 46,000 full-time screeners. Slight increases for Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

■ **Internal Revenue Service.** Reduces its budget to \$11.3 billion, \$500 million below last year's level. Provides none of the \$440 million Obama wanted to help the agency enforce the health care law.

■ **Financial agencies.** Nearly \$1.4 billion for the Securities and Exchange Commission, which is \$324 million below Obama's request. Small Business Administration budget also reduced.

■ **Veterans.** Extra money for technology upgrades, overtime and other spending to reduce the nearly 400,000 claims for disability benefits that have been pending for longer than 125 days.

■ **Diplomacy and foreign aid.** Provides \$25 million over Obama's \$5.4 billion request for security at diplomatic facilities overseas. Includes \$3.1 billion in aid for Israel. Links aid to Egypt to that country retaining its security relationship with the U.S. and continuing to abide by its peace accord with Israel. Cuts assistance to Afghanistan to \$1.1 billion. Bars the Overseas Private Investment Corporation and Export-Import Bank from halting work on overseas power plants, a provision aimed at protecting U.S. exports and jobs.

— The Associated Press

election-eve budget clash.

The legislation increases agency budgets by \$26 billion over last year's total. It still leaves them

\$31 billion below where last year's spending would have been if not for sequestration — budgetwide cuts triggered after lawmakers

failed to agree to deficit-cutting savings.

The measure let Republicans claim they have now restrained

agency spending for four straight years. They won cuts to the Internal Revenue Service and Transportation Security Administration and foreign aid, restricted spending to implement health care and financial regulation overhauls and won renewal of provisions limiting federal assistance for abortions.

"Today the House came together to keep the government open while further reining in its out-of-control spending," House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, said.

Democrats touted extra spending for Head Start preschool programs, food aid for poor pregnant women and biomedical research, and there was more money for the FBI, NASA and the border patrol as well.

Democrats claimed victories in protecting a requirement that some gun dealers report sales to the same buyer of multiple firearms and in blocking a GOP effort to curb federal regulation of utilities' greenhouse gas emissions.

In the House, 64 of the 67 "no" votes came from Republicans, including many of the chamber's most conservative members.

Among them was Rep. Paul Labrador, R-Idaho, who complained "Washington at its worst — a 1,582-page bill stuffed with pork, ineffective programs and giveaways, being rushed through Congress without proper review."

Cybersecurity chief had qualms over health site

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The top cybersecurity officer for the Health and Human Services Department said he was concerned about potential vulnerabilities ahead of the launch of the health care website.

Kevin Charest told congressional investigators he was unable to get answers to his questions from others inside the department. He concluded that the testing of the site was substandard.

"I would say that it didn't follow best practices," Charest testified in a Jan. 8 deposition. Excerpts of his testimony were provided to The Associated Press by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

Charest and Teresa Fryer — another government cybersecurity professional who also had qualms — were to testify before the panel Thursday.

Chairman Darrell Issa, R-Calif., investigating the rollout of the HealthCare.gov website, contends the administration risked the personal information of millions of Americans in its zeal to meet a self-imposed Oct. 1 deadline. The online federal insurance market is the main portal to cov-

erage under the program.

The panel's senior Democrat, Rep. Elijah Cummings, of Maryland, said the administration addressed the potential security issues through added vigilance instituted before the site went live. He said despite initial operational problems, the site has not been successfully hacked.

Cummings said it is Republicans who are risking the privacy of average citizens by demanding detailed blueprints that, if leaked, would become a road map for hackers.

With health care expected to be a polarizing issue in the midterm congressional elections, both political parties are at battle stations. Republicans have raised security issues but have yet to produce a smoking gun.

As chief information security officer for HHS, Charest offered a look at insider concerns during the weeks and days before the website went live. Technical problems developed immediately and many potential customers were frozen out.

The site seems to be working well now, but the signup campaign hasn't fully recovered its momentum.

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NATION

Global use of cigarettes, number of smokers up

By SANDI DOUGHTON
The Seattle Times

SEATTLE — Fifty years after the U.S. surgeon general first warned of the health effects of smoking, a new analysis from the University of Washington shows that the number of smokers worldwide — and the number of cigarettes consumed — has never been higher.

Between 1980 and 2012, the number of adults who smoke increased from 721 million to nearly 1 billion, reports the study published Tuesday in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. The number of cigarettes smoked globally jumped from about 5 trillion to 6.25 trillion.

The study, which is one of the

most comprehensive ever to examine global tobacco use, shows that the remarkable reductions in smoking rates in the United States and other wealthy countries have been offset by a growing epidemic in the developing world.

"The University of Washington study demonstrated clearly how much [farther] the world, particularly low- and middle-income countries, still has to go," said Matthew Myers, president of the Washington-based Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids.

The rise in the number of smokers reflects both population growth — particularly in nations such as China and Indonesia — and the tobacco industry's heavy marketing in poorer nations, experts say.

Boy dies of drinking meth at Mexico border crossing

By ELLIOT SPAGAT
The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — A Mexican high school student died from drinking highly concentrated liquid methamphetamine at a San Diego border crossing in an attempt to persuade inspectors that it was only apple juice, according to an autopsy report.

Cruz Marcelino Velazquez, 16, volunteered to take "a big sip" at the San Ysidro port of entry Nov. 18, said the report, which was released Wednesday. He was then handcuffed and taken to a security office, where he began screaming in pain, said something about "the chemicals," and shouted, "My heart! My heart!" in Spanish, it added.

The San Diego County Medical Examiner's report gives no indi-

cation that inspectors asked him to drink the liquid and doesn't say whether they had an opportunity to stop him when he volunteered. Velazquez died hours later at a hospital from acute methamphetamine intoxication.

Jackie Wasiluk, a spokeswoman for U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the agency that oversees ports of entry, had no immediate comment on the findings.

San Ysidro, the nation's busiest border crossing, has emerged as a major corridor for smuggling methamphetamine in the past five years as Mexico's Sinaloa cartel has increased its presence in the area. To avoid detection, crystal methamphetamine is dissolved in water and disguised in juice bottles, windshield wiper fluid containers and gas tanks. It is later converted back to crystals.

Airliner crash rescuer saw girl before she was struck

The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Video from the helmet camera of a firefighter responding to the crash landing of an Asiana Airlines flight in San Francisco shows at least one rescuer was aware someone was on the ground outside the aircraft and even warned a colleague. Yet two firefighters subsequently ran over an injured passenger.

The video, first aired by CBS News on Tuesday, shows the girl, Ye Meng Yuan, 16, lying in the grass before she was struck, according to an attorney for her fam-

ily. A coroner concluded she was alive at the time and died when she later was hit by a firetruck.

In the video, a firefighter with a helmet camera tells the driver of a firetruck that there's a person in front of him. A firetruck-mounted camera shows a firefighter directing the truck away from the person.

What's not clear from the video is why rescuers didn't try to move or clearly mark the presence of the person on the ground during the chaotic aftermath of the July 6 crash at San Francisco International Airport.



ROBERTO ROSALES, THE ALBUQUERQUE (N.M.) JOURNAL/AP

John Masterson and his wife, Lea, speak outside their door. Masterson is the teacher who confronted a shooter and took his shotgun away at a middle school Tuesday morning.

Detectives seek answers in NM school shooting

By RUSSELL CONTRERAS
AND SUSAN MONTVOYA BRYAN
The Associated Press

ROSWELL, N.M. — Investigators have turned up evidence that the 12-year-old boy who opened fire on a crowd of students in a New Mexico middle school gym had planned the attack and warned some classmates to stay away moments before the gunfire rang out.

Dozens of students and teachers at Berrendo Middle School have been interviewed during the past two days and search warrants have been served, leading to some key details. Still, investigators have yet to speculate about a motive, and teachers and students were bracing for a tough road ahead as classes resumed Thursday and the search for more answers continues.

At a news conference Wednesday, State Police Chief Pete Kasstas said it appeared the victims of Tuesday's shooting — an 11-year-old boy and a 13-year-old girl — were chosen randomly.

The shotgun used by the suspected shooter came from his family's home, and he had three rounds of ammunition, Kasstas said.

"All three rounds were expended during the incident," the police chief said. "There was no indication that he had any ammu-

nition other than what was loaded in the gun."

The 11-year-old boy who was shot in the face and neck remained in critical condition at University Medical Center in Lubbock, Texas. The 13-year-old girl, identified as Kendal Sanders, was in satisfactory condition with injuries to the right shoulder. The family of the injured boy has asked that his name be withheld while he recovers.

The suspected shooter's family issued a statement saying they were heartbroken and that their remorse could not be put into words. They said the two children who were injured have been in their thoughts and prayers.

"We are horribly sad over this tragedy on so many levels," the family stated. "We are praying that God will be with everyone who has been affected."

The family added it will cooperate with law enforcement to "piece together how this awful tragedy occurred."

Police have not released the boy's name, and The Associated Press typically doesn't identify juveniles charged with crimes.

Police didn't say when charges would be filed, only that they were working with the district attorney's office. Kasstas described the case as complex.

He said investigators worked through the night executing

search warrants at the school, and determined through those searches that the attack was planned. They examined the boy's locker and the duffel bag the seventh-grader is suspected of using to transport the .20-gauge shotgun to school.

Kasstas said the handle of the gun was sawed off so it had "more of a pistol grip."

He added that authorities had some indication the boy verbally warned "select students" about the attack as he arrived at the school. Kasstas didn't elaborate.

The shooting spurred a flood of 911 calls from students Tuesday morning. In some, screaming could be heard in the background.

The shooting was over in 10 seconds, officials said, after the boy fired at the ceiling, the floor and then the students. An eighth-grade social studies teacher, John Masterson, then stepped in and talked the boy into dropping his weapon.

Masterson and other teachers were lauded for taking quick action that authorities said would've saved lives had the boy had more ammunition, or had there been another gunman.

Chaves County Sheriff Rob Coon said all the schools in the county, public and private, undergo regular training for dealing with "active shooters."

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NATION



ANTONIO PEREZ, CHICAGO TRIBUNE/MCT

The Packard Automotive Plant, a former automobile manufacturing factory now in ruins in Detroit, is shown on Sept. 18. The city's decline has given rise to tourists who don't always sit well with residents.

Appeal in ruins

Detroit's abandoned buildings drawing tourists instead of developers

By ALANA SEMUELS
Los Angeles Times

DETROIT — He'd heard stories of ruin and blight, but that didn't prepare Oliver Kearney for what he saw:

Prostitutes roaming the streets at 8 a.m.; rubble-strewn parking lots overrun with weeds; buildings taken over by bright, pink graffiti; the message scrawled on blackboards in deserted schools: "I will not write in vacant buildings."

He took 2,000 photographs his first day.

"No other American city has seen decline on this scale," Kearney said. "It's really a once-in-a-lifetime thing you're going to see."

And he saw it all on a tour.

Kearney, 18, an aspiring architect, persuaded his father to travel with him from Britain to Detroit to participate in one of the city's few burgeoning industries: tours of abandoned factories, churches and schools.

Led by tour guide Jesse Welter, they crawled on their hands and knees to peek inside a train station closed long ago; they squeezed through a gap in a fence to climb the stairs of what was once a luxury high-rise; they ducked under crumbling doorways to see a forgotten ballroom where The Who held its first U.S. concert.

"In Detroit, you can relate,

you can see traces of what's happened, you can really feel the history of a city," Kearney said. "In Europe, when things become derelict, they'll demolish them."

That's not possible here. The city estimates it has 78,000 vacant structures, and demolishing each derelict residential building costs \$8,000 — money the bankrupt city can't afford.

The city says that 85 percent of its 142.9 square miles "experienced population decline" during the past decade, and efforts to persuade investors to buy commercial buildings to rehabilitate them have been mixed, at best. For example, plans to turn the Michigan Central Depot, a once-grand train station, into a casino and then into police headquarters have gone nowhere, and it's stood empty since 1988.

Photographers have flocked to the city to capture the decline. Two French photographers even produced a book, "The Ruins of Detroit." Since the city declared bankruptcy in July, hotels say they've seen an uptick in visitors inquiring about the ruins. So have restaurants in the up-and-coming district of Corktown, near the abandoned train station.

Welter, 42, said he had to buy a 12-seat van to accommodate the growing interest.

Welter guided his first tour in late 2011, but the business has really picked up this year. His

'No other American city has seen decline on this scale.'

Oliver Kearney

aspiring architect who took a tour of abandoned buildings in Detroit

clients pay \$45 for a three-hour tour and explore some of Detroit's most famously blighted structures: the Packard Automotive Plant, the train station and the East Grand Boulevard Methodist Church, which features peeling paint and vast balconies.

Welter, who is bearded and slim, knows how to sneak into buildings closed to the public. He knows which neighborhoods are plagued by packs of feral dogs, and which ramshackle building contains a recording studio with equipment still set up as if its occupants just left for lunch. He knows the churches so well that he helped a young couple find an abandoned one in which to conduct their wedding.

It's not legal, per se, to enter those buildings. Police will give \$225 tickets for trespassing if people enter schools, Welter said, but have otherwise told him they don't mind his going into other buildings.

On a recent weekday morning, he brought a visitor to one of his favorite spots, St. Agnes Catholic Church, a rotting structure

where graffiti vandals have made their mark. A beam of sunlight shone through the windows, falling on the one remaining pew in the church, a haunting image that illuminated the church's destruction. Then Welter heard a motor idling outside and quickly ushered his guest toward the exit.

"Someone's pulling up out there; let's start walking this way," he said, moving toward the crumbling staircase that leads to the church's courtyard, which was littered with soda cans and food wrappers.

He's not afraid of the authorities — they're in short supply in this cash-strapped city — but of scavengers, vagrants and others who might take advantage of someone with an expensive camera. That's why he usually launches his tours at 7 a.m., the best time to avoid other humans, he said.

Next, he headed into a girls' school attached to the church, climbing the stairs to a hall of classrooms where rubble was everywhere, as if a bomb had gone off. Some books and magazines dated to 1962 and told outdated

stories of boys living on the prairie. A bird's nest sat in one of the large windows where a pane used to be.

Locals use a derogatory term, "ruin porn," to describe the phenomenon of people gawking at the decay. They want visitors to see the positive parts of Detroit, such as the vacant fields that enterprising farmers have turned into urban gardens. If tourists are going to look at the ruins, they should then volunteer in the community, many Detroiters say.

"The decay is not cool, not arty-farty," Jean Vorkamp, a community activist and onetime mayoral candidate, said in an email. "I see the lady with bags and three layers of clothes on, and then I see a group of white young people climb out of their dad's cars with cameras that are worth so much."

Some Detroiters, including a group of urban explorers, have a beef with Welter in particular. They scrawled a message on the walls of the St. Agnes Church, "Go Home Jesse. We HATE you and your tour bus."

Welter said he's opening visitors' eyes to the problems of Detroit, which potentially could drop out political will to help the city.

"People are going to do this anyway," he said. "Why not do it in a way that's going to be safer, easier for everyone?"

NATION



Disappearing sand

Above: "We will endure" is scrawled on the wall of a house damaged by severe beach erosion in the Rocky Point neighborhood of Oahu's North Shore in Haleiwa, Hawaii. Right: Sandbags are piled in front of properties on the beach.

PHOTOS BY AUDREY McAVOY/AP

Hawaii coastal homes threatened as beaches erode

By AUDREY McAVOY
The Associated Press

Alice Lunt didn't worry too much when she saw waves splashing close to her home on Oahu's North Shore on Christmas Eve. She had seen the ocean edge close before. Before dawn, a neighbor woke her with a call.

"Everything was washing away," she remembered the neighbor saying.

The water claimed Lunt's deck that day and washed away a concrete slab the next night — part of a fast-moving collapse of the shore that also ripped out a neighbor's backyard and forced another to cut away rooms to save the rest of their house.

The Christmas swell damaged at least five oceanfront properties in the neighborhood, rekindling a decades-old debate about how best the state and homeowners should respond to beach erosion and the increasingly rising waters of the Pacific Ocean.

Some property owners want to be able to install a seawall or something similar to protect their property. Doing so, scientists say, could lead the sand on the nearby coastline — including Sunset Beach, home to some of the world's top surfing contests — to disappear.

"Do you build a seawall and potentially condemn the beach to extinction in front of the seawall but at the same time buy a lot of time for homeowners on the nearby land to figure out how to move away from that situation?" asked Chip Fletcher, a University of

Hawaii coastal geologist.

"Or do you not build a seawall, condemning the homes and the developed land to extinction, but allow the beach to survive?"

Fletcher said building seawalls always comes to mind wherever severe erosion occurs. He said studies show seawalls built on chronically eroding shorelines like Sunset Beach will lead only to more erosion down the coast.

Fletcher noted that other Oahu communities have already lost large chunks of beach because of seawalls.

These are stark options for Sunset Beach, where multimillion-dollar homes line the shore and where the globe's top surfers converge each year for the World Cup of Surfing.

Property owners wanting to get a seawall would need to draft an environmental study and get a state permit, a process that could take months.

In the short term, they may receive emergency authorization to place sandbags and tarp in front of their properties to deflect the waves, said Sam Lemmo, the coastal lands office administrator.

Krystle Dombrowski — whose family owns two houses next to Lunt's that they rent to vacationers — her husband, Kenneth, some friends and volunteers ran out of burlap sacks so they bought all the pillowcases at Wal-Mart and made bright-orange, red and polka dot sandbags.

Large surf that regularly hits the North Shore each winter brought the Christmas swell, not a freak storm.



Lunt said the beach fronting her home was particularly narrow because swells from the north that usually deposit sand during the summer weren't as frequent, and westerly swells had taken away sand instead. West and northwest swells have continued to carry away sand this winter, she said.

More fundamental factors are also at play. One is that sea levels have been rising for years, pushing the ocean inland. Another is that the Sunset coastline is chronically eroding, just like 70 percent of the beaches on Oahu, Maui and Kauai islands.

In the long term, both Lemmo and Fletcher believe government agencies should encourage people to move away from the coast to eliminate the question of whether seawalls should be built.

"We need to accommodate the erosion, allow it to occur, and we need to move away from it so it doesn't affect our lives," Lemmo said.

One option would be for a land conserva-

tion fund to buy properties along key shorelines and turn those areas into public parks, Fletcher said.

In Hawaii, the counties decide how far back from the coast dwellings may be built. On Oahu, people may only build homes 40 feet from the shoreline. Kauai and Maui counties, however, have adopted tighter rules in recognition of the erosion creeping up on their coastlines.

Even that may not be far enough, Fletcher said, noting those setbacks still allow buildings right on the sand dunes. Construction may need to be 150 feet from the shoreline to get away from the dunes, he said.

Rocky Point homes, like many of Hawaii's coastal homes, were built on dunes that would now be feeding the beach with sand if they didn't have structures on them.

"The event on the North Shore is a warning for all of us in Hawaii that these sorts of occurrences are part of our future," Fletcher said.

NATION

Driver 'saw history change all the time'

Long-serving CIA worker's road ends with stories to tell

BY IAN SHAPIRA
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The way Mr. Thornton tells the story, it was shortly after the Sept. 11 attacks, and he suddenly needed to drive the CIA's No. 3 official to a secret location three hours away in Virginia. His boss, A.B. "Buzzy" Krongard, was running late, so Mr. Thornton — a fedora-wearing septuagenarian who everyone, even agency directors, called by that honorific — would need to use his lead foot.

"It was at one of these under-cover places, and we were doing 80 mph. One time, I hit 100. But I got Buzzy there 15 minutes before the meeting," said Mr. Thornton, 79, who insists he cannot remember much else about the drive and why the meeting was so urgent. "All I knew about it was that it was a secret place," he said. "That's all I can say."

Mr. Thornton never ran spies. (So he says.) He never interrogated a terrorist suspect. But in his nearly 45 years at the CIA — a tenure that ended Dec. 20 when he retired — the Prince George's County, Md., man worked as an agency driver and became a fixture at the CIA's headquarters in Langley, Va. In his first two-plus decades, he operated agency shuttle buses, picking up CIA employees around Washington and dropping them off at government facilities. In the last 17 years or so, he chauffeured the agency's executive director — "ExDir," in agency parlance — as well as other agency officers.

Up until late December, Mr. Thornton occupied an unsung role in the national security establishment. Mr. Thornton was an unarmed CIA driver with top-secret security clearance who every day happened to hold in his hands the lives of elite spymasters — his "principals," as he dutifully calls them.

What did Mr. Thornton overhear in all those trips with the CIA's senior executives?

"You learn not to be too curious," he said, with a slight grin.

"I saw history change all the time, directors and executive directors come in and leave. I was there when things happened," he said. "But you couldn't go up and down the street saying you were there. I know it. The people I was hauling know it."

At Langley, Mr. Thornton walked the agency's seventh floor of senior executives, popping into offices, clad in Burberry or Joseph Abboud suits and red or brown bowlers or fedoras. On



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY/The Washington Post

Mr. Thornton, 79, drives in December during his next-to-last day of work for the Central Intelligence Agency.



At a CIA holiday reception in December 2013, Thornton stands between agency director John Brennan and deputy director Avril Haines. Thornton retired this month after almost 45 years of driving for the CIA.

his breaks, he routinely could be found at one of the back tables at the agency's Starbucks, chatting with fellow drivers. (Yes, the CIA has, among other chain eateries, a Starbucks, replete with Aimee Mann music and highly vetted baristas.) Those who didn't know him by name simply called him "The Hat Man."

In his nearly half-century at the CIA, Mr. Thornton witnessed his employer generate headlines frequently. Some of the people responsible for those headlines were the very people he was driving around.

Some of the stories hit close: One of his former principals, Kyle "Dusty" Foggo, pleaded guilty in

immigrant shot and killed two agency employees at a red light outside the headquarters. "I had stopped at a McDonald's and was on the way back to headquarters. I was in the fourth car behind the guys that got shot," Mr. Thornton said. "The shooter came down the line and was shooting at people. And then he jumped in a car, and they didn't know where he went. I was scared."

Other memories are more comical. Once, Mr. Thornton recalled, he had to pick up Krongard at a government facility somewhere in northern Virginia, and suddenly, George Tenet, then the agency's director, hopped into the back of his car, ditching his armed security.

"Tenet just said something like, 'Let's go! Put the pedal to the metal!'" Mr. Thornton said, laughing.

If Mr. Thornton overheard anything juicy from his principals, the talk likely centered on who was getting which job. "There could be discussion that you were going to promote Joe to John's job," Krongard said. "In the agency, that's worth its weight in gold, rather than whether we're going to run a coup in some country, because that's business as usual and won't affect anyone."

The drivers, after all, undergo polygraphs, which Mr. Thornton rarely minded. "They strap you in and put all this junk on you," he said, with a chuckle. "They ride on you, like 'What'd you hear in the car?' and 'Have you been overseas?' But I really can't discuss what they ask you."

Mr. Thornton grew up in Leesburg, Va., as one of 16 children, the son of a domestic worker and a farmer. He and his twin sister were the first in their family to earn high school diplomas, graduating in the early 1950s from the all-black Douglass High School in Leesburg. His first job: working as a janitor at Melpar, an engineering government contractor.

Then he got hired as a messenger at the Institute for Defense Analyses, a nonprofit corporation that operates federally funded research centers for the government. In that job, he often traveled to the CIA to pick up library books, he said. On one of his CIA trips, he learned the agency was hiring drivers, for better pay. He applied and got the job.

On June 8, 1969, when Richard Helms was director, Mr. Thornton began his CIA marathon and would become one of the longest-serving employees at the agency.

Now, Mr. Thornton is spending more time with his second wife, Dianne Thornton, a retired Montgomery County, Md., school principal. No more 3:30 a.m. wake-up times. No more 5 a.m. arrival times. No more 12- or 13-hour days. No more being on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Now it's time for vacations in Florida or overseas. To this day, Dianne doesn't question what her husband did exactly for CIA. Was he more than a just driver — perhaps a covert operative? At that question, his wife uttered a word not even people at the agency use. "That," she said, "is not my Bernard."

WORLD

UN: Syrian executions could be war crimes

The Associated Press

GENEVA — Extremist Islamic groups in Syria are committing a "soaring" number of killings in the country's north that could amount to war crimes, the U.N. human rights office said Thursday.

U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay said that over the past two weeks her office has received reports of "a succession of mass executions of civilians and fighters who were no longer participating in hostilities in Aleppo, Idlib and Raqqa by headline armed opposition groups in Syria, in particular by the 'al-Qaida-linked Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant'."

She warned that such killings violate international humanitarian law, and the numbers of such violations are thought to be alarmingly high.

Pillay's office reported that in the first week of January a number of people were killed in Idlib by armed opposition groups. It said that on Jan. 6 in Aleppo, three people reportedly held by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant at its base in Makhrat al-Salehien were killed, dead bodies, with bullet wounds in their heads.

Two days later, also in Aleppo, "numerous bodies, again mostly handcuffed and blindfolded, were found in a Children's Hospital" once used as a base by the group, the U.N. office said. It said at least four local media activists were among the dead, as well as captured fighters from armed opposition groups.

Pillay said there also are "deeply disturbing reports emerging of mass executions" by the al-Qaida-linked group, both when it withdrew from Raqqa and after it regained control earlier this week.

"These reports are particularly alarming, given the large number of people, including civilians, that armed opposition groups in Syria are believed to be holding in custody," Pillay said.

Al-Qaida asks Iraqis in embattled city for support

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Members of al-Qaida's local franchise handed out pamphlets urging residents in the city of Fallujah to take up arms and back the militants in their weeklong fight against Iraqi troops as clashes raged on around the city, residents said Thursday.

Since late last month, Iraqi security forces and allied Sunni tribesmen have been fighting to recapture key priorities. Led by al-Qaida-linked militants in the country's Sunni-dominated

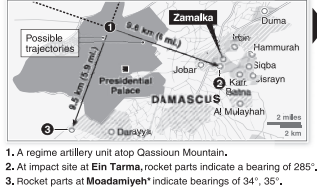
Analysis of chemical attack under fire

A new study suggests the U.S. intelligence assessments of the August 2013 chemical weapons attacks outside Damascus, Syria, were flawed. The study says the design of rocket used in the attacks, its likely payload and its possible trajectories show it would have been impossible for the rocket to have been fired from inside areas controlled by the Syrian government.

○ Chemical attacks, Aug. 21, 2013 ■ Regime control ■ Opposition control ■ Contested areas

Details of White House analysis released Aug. 30, 2013

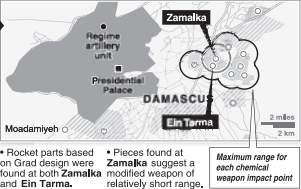
Rocket fragments studied at two sites by U.N. inspectors suggest flight trajectories shown below.



1. A regime artillery unit atop Qassioin Mountain.
2. At impact site at **Eln Tarma**, rocket parts indicate a bearing of 285°.
3. Rocket parts at **Moaddimeh** indicate bearings of 34°, 35°.

New analysis questions rockets' range

Assembly of modified Grad rockets suggests a maximum range of 1.3 m., far shorter than range stated by the White House.



- Rocket parts based on Grad design suggest a maximum range of 1.3 m., far shorter than range stated by the White House.
- Pieces found at **Zamalka** suggest a modified weapon of relatively short range.

SOURCES: MIT Science, Technology and Global Security Working Group, McClatchy Washington Bureau

ROBERT DORRILL, JUDY TREIBL/MCT

Analysis of rocket used in sarin gas attack undercuts US claims

By MATTHEW SCHOFIELD

McClatchy Foreign Staff

BERLIN — A series of revelations about the rocket believed to have delivered poison sarin gas to a Damascus suburb last summer are challenging American intelligence assumptions about that attack and suggest that the case U.S. officials initially made for retaliatory military action was flawed.

A team of security and arms experts, meeting this week in Washington to discuss the matter, has concluded that the range of the rocket that delivered sarin in the largest attack that night was too short for the device to have been fired from the Syrian government positions where the Obama administration says they originated.

Separately, international weapons experts are puzzling over why the rocket in question — an improvised 330 mm to 350 mm rocket equipped with a large receptacle on its nose to hold chemicals — reportedly did not appear in the Syrian government's declaration of its arsenal to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and apparently was not uncovered by OPCW inspectors who believe they have destroyed Syria's ability to deliver a chemical attack.

Neither development proved decisively that Syrian government forces did not fire the chemicals

that killed hundreds of Syrians in the early morning hours of Aug. 21. U.S. officials continue to insist that the case for Syrian government responsibility for the attack in East Ghouta is stronger than any suggestion of rebel involvement, while experts say it is possible Syria left the rockets out of its chemical weapons declaration simply to make certain it could not be tied to the attack.

That failure to declare can mean different things," said Raul Trapp, an original member of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and a former secretary of the group's scientific advisory board. "It can mean the Syrian government doesn't have them, or that they are hiding them."

In Washington, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence said its assertion of Syrian government responsibility remains unchanged.

"The body of information used to make the assessment regarding the August 21 attack included intelligence pertaining to the regime's preparations for this attack and its means of delivery, multiple streams of intelligence about the attack itself and its effect, our post-attack observations, and the differences between the capabilities of the regime and the

opposition. That assessment made clear that the opposition had not used chemical weapons in Syria," it said Wednesday in an email.

The authors of a report released Wednesday said that their study of the rocket's design, its likely payload and its possible trajectories show that it would have been impossible for the rocket to have been fired from inside areas controlled by the government of Syrian President Bashar Assad.

In the report, titled "Possible Implications of Faulty U.S. Technical Intelligence," Richard Lloyd, a former United Nations weapons inspector and the Theodore Postol, a professor of science, technology and national security policy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, argue that the question about the rocket's range indicates a major weakness in the case for military action initially pressed by Obama administration officials.

The administration eventually withdrew its request for congressional authorization for a military strike after Syria agreed to submit to the Chemical Weapons Convention, which bans the weapons. Polls showed overwhelming public opposition to a military strike, however, and it was doubtful Congress would have authorized an attack.

Voters in Egypt back charter, official says

CAIRO — An overwhelming majority of Egyptians voted on the country's new constitution have backed the draft charter, a senior official said Thursday.

The official told The Associated Press that unofficial results, after most ballots have been counted, indicate that more than 90 percent of the voters have said "yes" to the constitution.

He declined to give an estimate on the final turnout and spoke on condition of anonymity because he is not authorized to talk to the media. The vote, held Tuesday and Wednesday is a milestone for Egypt's interim government, installed by the military after the ouster last July of Islamist President Mohammed Morsi.

The draft is also a key piece of a political road map toward elections for a president and a test of public opinion about the coup that removed Morsi and his Muslim Brotherhood. It is a heavily amended version of a constitution written by Morsi's Islamist allies and ratified in December 2012 with some 64 percent of the vote but with a nationwide turnout of just over 30 percent.

Vatican criticized for handling of abuse cases

GENEVA — The Vatican came under increasing criticism after a U.N. committee Thursday for its handling of the global priest sex abuse scandal, facing its most intense public grilling over allegations that it protected pedophile priests at the expense of victims.

In a report released Wednesday, the Vatican's former sex crimes prosecutor, acknowledged that the Holy See had been slow to face the crisis but said that it was now committed to doing so. He encouraged prosecutors to take action against anyone who obstructs justice — a suggestion that bishops who moved priests from diocese to diocese should be held accountable.

He was responding to a grilling by the U.N. committee over the Holy See's failure to follow up by terms of a treaty that calls for signatories to take all appropriate measures to keep children from harm. Critics allege the church enabled the rape of thousands of children by protecting pedophile priests to defend its reputation.

Indian police close in on 6 men in gang rape

NEW DELHI — Indian police said Thursday that they were closing in on six homeless men in the gang rape of a 51-year-old Danish tourist in New Delhi, a case that highlights the plague of sexual violence in the country and threatens to tarnish its tourism industry.

Two other suspects were picked up Wednesday night and accused of taking part in Tuesday's attack, which lasted nearly three hours and happened near Connaught Place, a popular shopping area in the heart of New Delhi, police spokesman Rajan Bhagat said.

"We have identified the culprit. All of them are in New Delhi," a police official said, according to the Press Trust of India.

From The Associated Press

hedeon, the residents said. They spoke on condition of anonymity, fearing for their safety.

Another pamphlet announced that al-Qaida would form a Commission for Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice that would look into the disputes among Fallujah residents, they said.

Meanwhile, clashes between Iraqi security forces and al-Qaida militants raged in two Fallujah neighborhoods from late Wednesday night to Thursday morning, residents said.

A medical official said the city

hospital received the bodies of seven men killed in the fighting and that 13 were wounded. He was unable to provide a breakdown of how many of the dead were militants and how many might have been civilians caught up in the clashes.

Iraqi state TV said security forces and allied tribal fighters clashed inside and around the city of Ramadi on Thursday, marking several areas captured earlier by al-Qaida fighters. No more details were given.

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FAITH

Hanging on to hope



MARCUS YAM, SEATTLE TIMES/MCT

Greg and Renee Wood turned their ministry, Word of Life, over to their son as Greg is battling colon cancer and Renee is battling breast cancer. They were able to meet financial needs with help from Hopelink.

When hard times hit, Greg and Renee Wood came on the receiving end of helping others

BY SANDI DOUGHTON
The Seattle Times

SEATTLE — Throughout their married life, Greg and Renee Wood have always been the ones who take care of other people.

As Christian pastors for nearly 20 years, they tended to the spiritual — and temporal — needs of their congregation.

As parents, they raised six children of their own while also taking in dozens of abused youngsters.

As active members of their community, they organized a program to provide backpacks filled with school supplies for students in need.

When the Woods found themselves sick, unemployed and on the brink of being evicted from their home earlier this year, asking for help didn't come easily to them.

After all, they had coped with misfortune before.

Two years after their eldest son died from a seizure in 2004, Renee was diagnosed with breast cancer. Her first rounds of treatment went well, though, knocking the disease into remission.

Even after the cancer came back with a vengeance and Renee was forced to stop working, she and Greg were able to keep their heads above water.

When Greg was diagnosed with ad-

vanced colon cancer in June, their financial safety net evaporated.

With the main breadwinner too weak to work — and uninsured — the family fell behind on rent and utilities and even had a hard time buying groceries.

"It felt like we'd been hit with bombs — one after the other," Renee said.

Then a friend told her about Hopelink. With centers across North and East King County, Wash., the organization provides a range of services aimed mostly at helping people cope with crises and get back on their feet. Like many of the 60,000 people Hopelink serves each year, Renee's first contact came through one of the group's five food banks.

There, she discovered that Hopelink also provides emergency assistance to keep people from being evicted.

"They paid our utilities. They helped pay our rent," Renee said. "They were the answer to a prayer."

Founded in 1971 by laid-off Boeing workers who banded together to help each other find jobs, Hopelink continues that mission with programs to help people improve their resumes and job-hunting skills. The nonprofit provides transportation services along with temporary housing, adult education and advice on money management.

"We're trying to help people get back to

self-sufficiency," said spokeswoman Kris Bether.

For Greg and Renee Wood, rent assistance helped solve their most pressing financial need. Ongoing visits to the food bank keep groceries in the fridge while both husband and wife undergo physically draining chemotherapy.

"This is a difficult time for them," said Kay Hockeiser, an emergency services specialist at Hopelink's Kirkland, Wash., center. "They have been hardworking all their lives, and they really do want to work, but because of these unfortunate events they

can't."

It's particularly tough on Greg.

"As head of the household all those years, I feel like I'm supposed to be taking care of everyone else," he said on a recent Sunday, as family and friends gathered at his home for a Bible discussion.

Greg, 60, and Renee, 58, passed the leadership of their Lynnwood, Wash., ministry, Word of Life, to their son, Sheldon, a couple

of years ago. Making a living as a pastor is rarely a lucrative business, said Greg.

After he gave up church work, he took a job at U-Haul, and was two months away from being eligible for health insurance when he received his cancer diagnosis.

Though both he and Renee eventually qualified for coverage through Medicaid, they still owe thousands of dollars for medical expenses.

They refuse to let their financial and health woes take over their lives.

"I'm very optimistic," said Renee. "I feel like this is just another part of our journey that we're going to grow and learn from."

Last fall, Renee, Greg and several family members set up housekeeping together in Snohomish. Their children pay the bills and assist their parents with their medical regimens.

"I feel so loved and protected," Renee said. "We've always been a very close family."

But she and Greg also fret about imposing on their children. "I'm used to saying to them, 'What do you need?'" Renee said.

Greg and Renee both hope they'll be able to work again soon.

That would be the best possible outcome, Hockeiser said. "We want people to be stable in the future, and, hopefully, not need our services," she said.

'I feel like this is just another part of our journey that we're going to grow and learn from.'

Renee Wood

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Pantsless man attempts to board school bus

OR CRESWELL — Oregon State Police said a man rammed a Creswell school bus to force it to stop on Interstate 5 in Lane County then took off his pants and tried to board.

There were no children on the bus at the time Tuesday afternoon, and the driver kept the door closed.

As troopers and deputies arrived, the man got back in his car and tried to drive away. The car had two flat tires and crashed into a pond.

Troopers arrested the 38-year-old Bothell, Wash., man and jailed him on charges that include drunken driving, hit-and-run and being a felon in possession of a firearm.

Plymouth Rock graffiti is quickly cleaned up

MA PLYMOUTH — Vandalism has struck Plymouth Rock, but the spray-painted mess was quickly cleaned up.

Someone spray-painted the word "LIES" on the chunk of rock earlier this week. Plymouth Rock is engraved with "1620" to mark the Pilgrims' arrival in the New World.

The vandals also defaced the granite walls of the landmark's sunken enclosure with an obscene figure, the phrase "For a drug filled world" and the letter A inside a circle similar to the anarchist symbol.

A worker for the state Department of Conservation and Recreation removed the graffiti Tuesday morning. There was no word on arrests.

Man gets hefty fine for trophy buck poaching

WY RIVERTON — A judge ordered a Riverton man to pay a hefty fine for poaching an 18-point buck deer.

Investigators said Joseph A. Holden, 28, didn't have a general deer license when he shot the deer near the North Fork of the Popo Agie River in October.

Holden pleaded guilty in circuit court last month. Judge Robert Denhardt ordered him to pay \$7,500 in fines and \$4,000 in restitution.

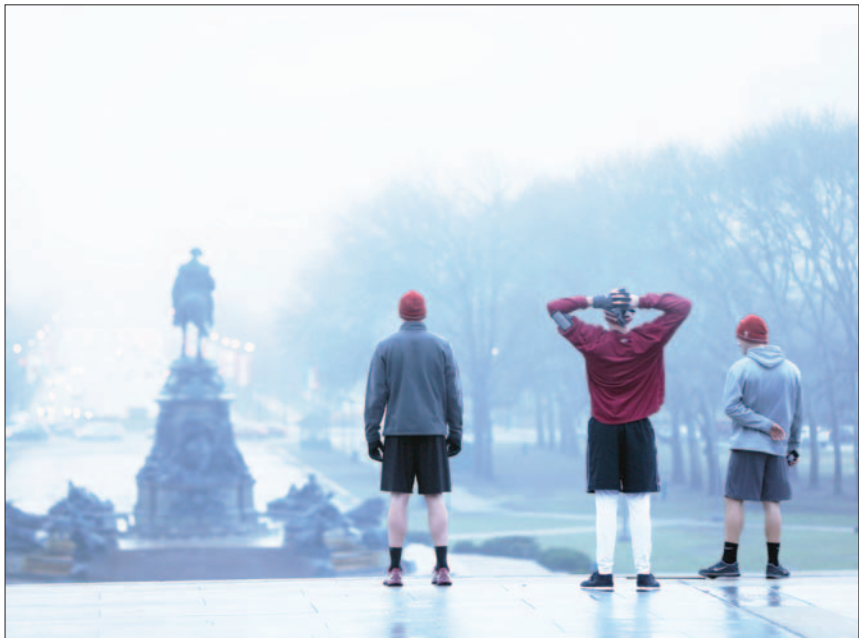
The Riverton Ranger reported the judge also revoked Holden's hunting privileges for 10 years and ordered him to turn over the .223-caliber AR-15-style rifle he used to kill the deer.

Authorities said Holden left the meat to waste. They will try to make some kind of public use of the head, which had nontypical antlers representing 31.5 inches across.

Woman gets 1 year for hitting Wal-mart worker

NY BATAVIA — A 28-year-old woman has been given a court-ordered one-year sentence for punching a 70-year-old cashier at a western New York Wal-Mart on Christmas Eve 2011.

The Daily News of Batavia re-



MATT ROURKE/AP

Foggy Philly

Runners take in the view from the top of the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art on a foggy Wednesday in Philadelphia.

ported Jacquetta Simmons was resentenced Monday after a state appeals court earlier this month ruled that her original five-year state prison sentence was too harsh. She'll serve a one-year term in a county jail with credit for time already served.

Simmons was convicted in August 2012 of assault for punching Wal-Mart cashier Grace Suozzi after she asked to see a receipt for merchandise Simmons was carrying out of the Batavia store on the morning of Dec. 24, 2011. Police said the punch knocked the cashier to the ground and caused fractures to the side of her face.

YouTube posting of pot plants leads to arrest

CT CLINTON — A Connecticut man faces drug charges after police say he posted a YouTube video of himself giving a tour of his marijuana "garden."

Police in the shoreline town of Clinton arrested William Bradley, 46, on Monday following a six-month investigation.

In the video, a man identifying himself as Bradley welcomes people to his garden and says he's growing marijuana because he has terminal cancer. He also solicits donations, saying he wants to give away marijuana to people who need it for medical reasons.

Police say they seized more than 2 pounds of marijuana and

other drugs Monday from a storage unit he used. Bradley was charged with drug crimes and detained on \$5,000 bail.

State police probe milk tanker spill

PA NEW PARIS — State police have been investigating a tanker truck crash that spilled about 6,000 gallons of raw milk onto privately owned marsh and meadows in southwestern Pennsylvania.

Troopers from the Bedford barracks said the crash happened Saturday in East St. Clair Township, about 70 miles southeast of Pittsburgh, near New Paris.

Although milk isn't a hazardous material, it can kill fish and other aquatic life if it reaches a waterway in high concentrations.

Bedford County emergency management director David Cubison said crews worked for hours to contain the spill, while Penelc workers were called to fix power lines downed by the crash.

Chicken farm closes 2nd time after roach cleanup

CA LIVINGSTON — A California chicken farm that reopened over the weekend after it was shut because of a cockroach infestation said it "voluntarily and temporarily" suspending operations again.

Foster Farms said Sunday it was closing the plant in Livingston for several days so it can properly implement new food safety measures. The company said in a statement that it is "exercising vigilance" and dedicating additional time to ensure its preventative plan is realized.

Work had resumed Saturday after Foster Farms announced that it met the demands of the U.S. Department of Agriculture by performing a thorough clean-up and treatment of the plant.

The plant closed Jan. 8 when inspectors found the cockroaches on five separate occasions in various parts of the plant over four months. That closure came three months after inspectors threatened a shutdown because of salmonella problems at the Livingston plant and two Foster Farms sites in Fresno.

Police officers allege bias in reassignments

TX AUSTIN — More than a dozen Austin police officers have filed complaints with the state alleging racial and age discrimination in the wake of staff reassignments.

The Austin American-Statesman reported the complaints submitted in recent weeks with the Texas Workforce Commission are a required step before a lawsuit can be filed.

The department last summer

reassigned 19 supervisors and officers who were part of a prominent organized crime division. They were transferred from coveted positions to jobs that include night patrol shifts.

Thirteen of the officers filed complaints with the commission. Nearly all of them are black or Hispanic officers in their 50s.

Police officials have said the division needed a staffing overhaul, and that such transfers are not uncommon for specialized units where burnout can be a problem.

Man is accused of illegally feeding moose

AK ANCHORAGE — An Anchorage man is accused of illegally feeding cabbage to multiple moose on his property, according to Alaska State Troopers.

Troopers received a tip last month that Samuel Becker, 67, had been feeding moose. They said they responded Jan. 4 and determined Becker had illegally fed the animals the day of their visit.

Becker was issued a summons to appear in court Feb. 3 to face a misdemeanor charge of intentionally feeding game, Troopers spokeswoman Megan Peters said.

The misdemeanor carries a maximum penalty of one year in jail and a \$10,000 fine, she said. State prosecutors have not filed charges.

From wire reports

FACES

'Hustle,' 'Gravity' lead Oscar nominations

BY JAKE COYLE
The Associated Press

The con-artist comedy "American Hustle" and the 3-D space odyssey "Gravity" lead the Academy Awards with 10 nominations each, with the historical epic "12 Years a Slave" trailing closely with nine nominations.

The nominations announced Thursday set up a race between three very different films, all of which were nominated for best picture.

Nine films were nominated for best picture. The other nominees are "Captain Phillips," "Dallas Buyers Club," "Her," "Nebraska," "The Wolf of Wall Street" and the British film "Philomena."

The most notable omission for a nomination was Tom Hanks for his lead performance in "Captain Phillips." Hanks has been nominated five times previously, and has won for "Forrest Gump" and "Philadelphia."

Robert Redford, expected by many to be nominated for the shipwreck drama "All Is Lost," also missed out on a best actor nod. Redford has never won an acting Oscar.

Disney's making of "Mary Poppins" tale "Sav-

ing Mr. Banks" also failed to land either a best picture nomination or a best actress nod for British-born Emma Thompson.

The best actress nominees are Amy Adams ("American Hustle"), Australian-born Cate Blanchett ("Blue Jasmine"), Sandra Bullock ("Gravity"), British-born Judi Dench ("Philomena") and Meryl Streep ("August: Osage County").

This is Streep's 18th nomination, including three wins.

Many enjoyed their first Oscar nomination Thursday, including Ejiofor, McConaughey, Michael Fassbender ("12 Years a Slave"), McQueen, Barkhad Abdi (a limo driver before being cast in "Captain Phillips") and Jared Leto, who had devoted himself to music before returning to play a transsexual in the drama "Dallas Buyers Club."

Though historically the most-nominated films have taken home the best picture award, that's not been the case in recent years. In six of the past 10 years, the most-nominated film hasn't won in the end, including last year when "Lincoln," with 12 nominations, was beaten by "Argo."



The 86th annual Academy Awards, with host Ellen DeGeneres, are March 2. The show's producers have said the ceremony this year will honor heroes — and the filmmakers who bring them to life. Craig Zadan and Neil Meron said Tuesday they wanted to unify the show with an entertaining and emotional theme.

AP

SELECT NOMINEES FOR THE 86TH ANNUAL ACADEMY AWARDS

Best Picture: "American Hustle," "Captain Phillips," "Dallas Buyers Club," "Gravity," "Her," "Nebraska," "Philomena," "12 Years a Slave," "The Wolf of Wall Street"

Actor: Christian Bale, "American Hustle"; Bruce Dern, "Nebraska"; Leonardo DiCaprio, "The Wolf of Wall Street"; Chiwetel Ejiofor, "12 Years a Slave"; Matthew McConaughey, "Dallas Buyers Club"

Actress: Amy Adams, "American Hustle"; Cate Blanchett, "Blue Jasmine"; Sandra Bullock, "Gravity"; Judi Dench, "Philomena"; Meryl Streep, "August: Osage County"

Supporting Actor: Barkhad Abdi, "Captain Phillips"; Bradley Cooper, "American Hustle"; Michael Fassbender, "12 Years a Slave"; Jonah Hill, "The Wolf of Wall Street"; Jared Leto, "Dallas Buyers Club"

Supporting Actress: Sally Hawkins, "Blue Jasmine"; Jennifer Lawrence, "American Hustle"; Lupita Nyong'o, "12 Years a Slave"; Julia Roberts, "August: Osage County"; June Squibb, "Nebraska"

Directing: David O. Russell, "American Hustle"; Alfonso Cuarón, "Gravity"; Alexander Payne, "Nebraska"; Steve McQueen, "12 Years a

Slave"; Martin Scorsese, "The Wolf of Wall Street"

Foreign Language Film: "The Broken Circle Breakdown," Belgium; "The Great Beauty," Italy; "The Hunt," Denmark; "The Missing Picture," Cambodia; "Omar," Palestine

Animated Feature Film: "The Croods"; "Despicable Me 2"; "Ernest & Celestine"; "Frozen"; "The Wind Rises"

Original Song: "Alone Yet Not Alone" from "Alone Yet Not Alone," Bruce Broughton and Dennis Spiegel; "Happy" from "Despicable Me 2," Pharrell Williams; "Let It Go" from "Frozen,"

Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Robert Lopez; "The Moon Song" from "Her," Karen O and Spike Jonze; "Ordinary Love" from "Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom," Paul Hewson, Dave Evans, Adam Clayton and Larry Mullen

Costume: "American Hustle," "The Grandmaster," "The Great Gatsby," "The Invisible Woman," "12 Years a Slave"

Makeup and Hairstyling: "Dallas Buyers Club," "Jackass Presents: Bad Grandpa," "The Lone Ranger"

For a complete list: oscar.go.com

From The Associated Press

REACTIONS TO THE NOMINATIONS



"Yesterday I was doing jury duty, today I woke up with an Academy Award nomination. Only in America."

— Jared Leto on his nomination for best supporting actor for "Dallas Buyers Club"



"Congratulations to the cast and crew of 'American Hustle' and 'Her,' two films that I'm incredibly proud to be a part of."

— Best actress nominee Amy Adams, who was nominated for her role in "American Hustle."



"I'm at home in Malibu, having a cup of tea, catching the sunrise. My newborn's walking around. ... What a great alarm clock and news to wake up to this morning."

— Best actor nominee Matthew McConaughey, for his performance in "Dallas Buyers Club"



"My knees buckled. It's the last thing I expected."

— Sally Hawkins, nominated for best supporting actress for her role in "Blue Jasmine"

Quotes and photos from The Associated Press

FACES



Producer: Revelations vindicate show

BY LYNN ELBER
The Associated Press

Producers of "Person of Interest" said revelations about government surveillance have proved early critics of the TV drama wrong.

Jonathan Nolan recalled that the show about an all-seeing machine used to prevent crime was labeled far-fetched by some observers when it debuted in 2011.

But after former National Security Agency analyst Edward Snowden's disclosures about secret government surveillance programs, there was a brief period of gloating at "Person of Interest," Nolan said.

"It validated our decision to wear tinfoil hats for the last two years," he

'We've always said, if we do our job, at the end of every episode you should be looking at your cell phone a little bit differently.'

Greg Plageman
producer, "Person of Interest"

said Wednesday.

Concern about "our nation's descent into an Orwellian nightmare" aside, Nolan said, comparisons between the show and the NSA disclosures have given "Person of Interest" a third-season boost of attention.

The show has had a "pervasive sense of paranoia" from the start, said his fel-

low producer, Greg Plageman.

"We've always said, if we do our job, at the end of every episode you should be looking at your cell phone a little bit differently on the table," Plageman said.

Plageman and Nolan made their comments as part of a Q&A session between CBS drama producers and members of the Television Critics Association.

"Person of Interest" stars Michael Emerson, left, and Jim Caviezel. The show airs Wednesdays on AFN-Prime.

CBS

TV a haven for actors, according to Thornton

BY LYNN ELBER
The Associated Press

Billy Bob Thornton said actors who want to work on sophisticated projects are finding them in television and not film.

He's proving the point with a starring role in the upcoming FX series "Fargo," inspired by the 1996 Joel and Ethan Coen movie.

Thornton told a Television Critics Association meeting Tuesday that while Hollywood studios churn out action movies, broad comedies and "movies where apparently vampires are all models," TV offers the kind of insightful work once common in films.

He says that's why peers like Kevin Costner, Dennis Quaid and Kevin Bacon have turned to television.

"The entertainment business can pretend all they want, but the movie world has changed drastically, particularly in the last five or six years," said Thornton, who won a best-screenplay Oscar for "Sling Blade" and was nominated for his role in the 1996 film.

"If you want to be an actor, get on a really good series in television because there's where it's at," Thornton said.



Thornton

Trace Adkins leaves cruise, enters rehab

Country singer Trace Adkins has entered alcohol rehab.

Adkins' publicist tells Country Weekly and confirms to

The Associated Press on Wednesday that the singer entered rehab after consuming alcohol during the Country Cruising cruise.

The 52-year-old "Celebrity Apprentice" winner has canceled the remainder of his performances during the week-long cruise that wraps up Sunday after stops in Jamaica, Grand Cayman and Mexico.

There were no other details available.

An email to Norwegian Cruise Lines seeking information was not immediately returned.

Wyonna, Montgomery Gentry and Love and Theft were among the other acts performing aboard the NCL Pearl with Adkins.

From The Associated Press



Adkins

CBS is sticking with what works when it comes to pilots

From wire reports

The process of making TV pilots every year may be a relic of the pre-Netflix era — but CBS isn't going to abandon it any time soon.

"Pilot season does work for us," CBS Entertainment President Nina Tassler told reporters Wednesday at the TV media tour in Pasadena, Calif. "It's not perfect ... it certainly is a very difficult time ... (but) it's also exciting." Tassler said the "creative adrenaline" of pilot season had led to such hits as "The Big Bang Theory" and "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation."

Pilots — or more specifically, the season from December to May when pilots are ordered, made and then possibly given the green light for fall or midseason series — are a topic of hot debate in the TV industry right now. The process will win no awards for efficiency: Out of several dozen pilots made each spring, each network typically picks five or six new fall shows.

As usual, CBS seemed determined to emphasize stability, announcing that it was renewing its entire daytime lineup, including "The Talk," "The Price Is Right" and soaps "The Young and the Restless" and "The Bold and the Beautiful."

CW: 'Veronica Mars' spinoff planned for online

The CW says it's developing an online spinoff of the "Veronica Mars" series.

Series creator Rob Thomas has agreed to do the digital version, CW President Mark Pedowitz told a meeting of the Television Critics Association on Wednesday.

The decision to proceed with the spinoff was made Tuesday and details have yet to be worked out, including the cast and characters, the CW said. A debut date was not announced.

"Veronica Mars," which was canceled in 2007 after three seasons, is enjoying a re-

surge. A film based on the show about a crime-solving teen, played by Kristen Bell, was funded by the crowd-funding site Kickstarter. The movie is due out in March.

Network to air miniseries about search for Holy Grail

The CW network says it has acquired a miniseries about the search for the Holy Grail.

The cast of the four-hour project, "Labyrinth," includes former "Downton Abbey" star Jessica Brown-Findlay, along with Vanessa Kirby, Sebastian Stan and John Hurt.

The miniseries centers on a 13th-century teenager and a modern woman, and their shared quest for the grail, the cup said to have been used by Jesus Christ.

"Labyrinth" is adapted from Kate Mosse's best-selling novel of the same name. An air date wasn't announced for the drama, which has appeared in Britain and elsewhere.

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OPINION

No common cause in Common Core

By GEORGE F. WILL

Viewed from Washington, which often is the last to learn about important developments, opposition to the Common Core State Standards Initiative still seems as small as the biblical cloud that ariseth out of the sea, no larger than a man's hand. Soon, however, this education policy will fill a significant portion of the political sky.

The Common Core represents the ideas of several national organizations (of governors and school officials) about what and how children should learn. It is the thin end of an enormous wedge. It is designed to advance in primary and secondary education the general progressive agenda of centralization and uniformity.

Understandably, proponents of the Common Core want its nature and purpose to remain as cloudy as possible for as long as possible. Hence they say it is a "state-led," "voluntary" initiative to merely guide education with standards that are neither written nor approved nor mandated by Washington, which would never, ever "prescribe" a national curriculum. Proponents talk warily when describing it because a candid characterization would reveal yet another Obama administration indifference to legality.

The 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the original federal intrusion into this state and local responsibility, said "nothing in this act" shall authorize any federal official to "mandate, direct, or control" schools' curriculums. The 1970 General Education Provisions Act stipulates that "no provision of any applicable program shall be construed to authorize any 'federal agency or official' to exercise any direction, supervision, or control over the curriculum, program of instruction" or selection of "instructional materials by

any" school system.

The 1979 law creating the Department of Education forbids it from exercising "any direction, supervision, or control over the curriculum" or "program of instruction" of any school system. The ESEA as amended says no Education Department funds "may be used ... to endorse, approve, or sanction any curriculum designed to be used in" grades K-12.

Nevertheless, what begins with mere national standards must breed ineluctable pressure to standardize educational content. Targets, metrics, guidelines and curriculum models all induce conformity in instructional materials.

Washington already is encouraging the alignment of the GED, SAT and ACT tests with the Common Core. By a feedback loop, these tests will beget more curriculum conformity. All of this will take a toll on parental empowerment, and none of this will escape the politicization of learning like that already rampant in higher education.

Leave aside the abundant, fierce, often learned and frequently convincing criticisms of the writing, literature and mathematics standards. Even satisfactory national standards must extinguish federalism's creativity. At any time, it is more likely there will be half a dozen innovative governors than one creative federal education bureaucracy. And the mistakes made by top-down federal reforms are *continental* mistakes.

The Obama administration has purchased states' obedience by partially conditioning waivers from onerous federal regulations (from No Child Left Behind) and receipt of federal largess (\$4.35 billion in Race to the Top money from the 2009 stimulus) on the states' embrace of the Common Core. Although 45 states and the District of Columbia have struck this

bargain, most with little debate, some are reconsidering and more will do so as opposition mounts.

Many proponents seem to deem it beneath their dignity to engage opponents' arguments, preferring to caricature opponents as political primitives and to dismiss them with flippancies such as this from Bill Gates: "It's ludicrous to think that multiplication in Alabama and multiplication in New York are really different."

What is ludicrous is Common Core proponents' disdainful concerns related to this fact: Fifty years of increasing Washington inputs into K-12 education has coincided with disappointing cognitive outputs from schools. Is it eccentric that it is imprudent to apply to K-12 education the federal touch that has given us HealthCare.gov?

The rise of opposition to the Common Core illustrates three healthy aspects of today's politics. First, new communication skills and technologies enable energized minorities to force new topics onto the political agenda.

Second, this uprising of local communities against state capitals, the nation's capital and various muscular organizations (e.g., the Business Roundtable, the Chamber of Commerce, teachers unions, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation) demonstrates that although the public agenda is malleable, a sturdy portion of the public is not.

Third, political dishonesty has swift, radiating and condign consequences. Opposition to the Common Core is surging because Washington, hoping to mollify opponents, is saying, in effect: "If you like your local control of education, you can keep it. Period." To which a burgeoning movement is responding: "No. Period."

Will is a member of the Washington Post Writers Group.

French not so blase about leaders' sex lives

By JOSHUA KEATING

State

The old stereotype is that puritanical American voters obsess about their leaders' sex lives while the French can't be bothered. Take, for instance, the contrast between Bill Clinton, whose extramarital affair dominated American politics for years, and Francois Mitterrand, who was somehow able to spend most of the nights of his presidency staying with a second family without the press, public or political opposition taking notice. (Both "widows" attended his funeral.)

But for a country that supposedly doesn't care about politicians' sex lives, we seem to hear an awful lot about French politicians' sex lives. A policy advisory by deeply unpopular President Francois Hollande this week was overshadowed by tabloid reports that he has been having an affair with actress Julie Gayet. First lady Valerie Trierweiler has been hospitalized for unclear reasons.

Hollande was supposed to be Monsieur Normal, an appealingly bland return to sanity after the tabloid distractions of the Nicolas Sarkozy years. But his messy personal life has been on display almost from the beginning with his partner, Trierweiler, carrying on a very public feud with Hollande's ex, former presidential candidate Segolene Royal.

It's true that 77 percent of French voters say the affair should be a personal matter and 84 percent say it won't change their (very negative) opinion of Hollande. But



French president-elect Francois Hollande kisses his companion, Valerie Trierweiler, new hospitalized after news broke last week that Hollande was having an affair, in May 2012.

with all due respect to the French, I don't buy this for a second. The gossip magazine Closer sold out the issue featuring photos of Hollande pulling up to Gayet's apartment. The first question at this week's press conference, which was supposed to be devoted to policy issues, from the head of the Presidential Press Association, was whether Trierweiler is still first lady. (Hol-

lande ducked it.)

It's true that the mainstream media in France was slow to jump on this until the Closer photos forced the issue, but the blogosphere has been buzzing about Hollande and Gayet for almost a year.

To be sure, the French aren't quite Americans yet. It's almost impossible to imagine the global-media-dominating seismic Dreyfusgate that would result if President Barack Obama were ever photographed being dropped off by motorcycle at a Hollywood starlet's apartment. The U.S. hasn't even elected an unmarried president since James Buchanan, much less one who has had relationships with three different very famous women, none of whom he has married.

In terms of the media's attitude toward what's acceptable to cover about presidents, things haven't actually been this way in the U.S. for that long. John F. Kennedy and Franklin Roosevelt would find today's U.S. media about as uncomfortable as Mitterrand. U.S. voters are fairly realistic about this, with the majority saying that greater scrutiny rather than falling morals are the reason why there are more political sex scandals today.

The French may never have been quite as blasé about political sex as they like to pretend, but a number of factors including the Internet and the British and American tabloid media's insatiable hunger for French sex scandals are making it harder for the mainstream French media to downplay these stories or for French citizens to act like they're not interested.

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

Gun control and states' rights The Paris (Tenn.) Post-Intelligencer

Didn't we fight the Civil War over whether federal law prevails over states' rights? Now, conservative lawmakers in several states are attempting to organize defiance of certain federal laws, beginning with gun control. Their idea is that if enough states band together, they can overwhelm Uncle Sam's enforcement power.

A measure introduced last week in the Missouri Legislature seeks to prevent some federal gun control regulations from being enforced. State law enforcement officers who attempt to enforce the federal rules would be subject to civil and criminal penalties.

That body came within one vote of passing a similar measure last year. This year's proposal, The Associated Press reported, delays the effective date of the rebellious rules to give other states time to join the cause.

Sounding for all the world like a Confederate organizer, one Missouri senator said, "We continue to see the federal government overreach their rightful bounds, and if we can create a situation where we have some unity among states, then I think it is a better position to make that argument."

Courts have consistently ruled that states do not have the power to nullify federal laws, but that doesn't keep the restless from trying.

Last year, for example, a federal appeals court struck down a 2009 federal law that would bar federal regulation of guns that are made in that state and which remain within its borders.

Open defiance is not the right path. The proper arena for this struggle is neither Fort Sumter nor the Supreme Court, but Congress. Obviously, many Americans sympathize with the objection to gun control laws, so let their elected representatives sort this out, using the procedure spelled out in the U.S. Constitution.

More to the Haiti story The Miami Herald

Four long and painful years after a cataclysmic earthquake leveled Port-au-Prince and much of Haiti, the country is emerging from the depths of the disaster. Rebuilding is replacing recovery. A measure of order is replacing the chaos of the early years.

Most of the rubble is gone. Where once the capital's streets and surrounding areas housed 1,500 makeshift camps for about 1.5 million refugees, the numbers were down considerably near year's end: 175,000 remained in 306 camps. Ten new hurricane shelters are being built, the country boasts 180-plus miles of newly paved roads, there are 46 new health centers and seven new hospitals. And so on.

This is progress, but hold the applause. The numbers don't tell the full story.

Too much time has been wasted in re-criminations among the government of President Michel Martelly, the country's police and the international aid groups that receive much of the money directly. Political disarray has blocked elections. Tens of thousands were forcibly evicted from camps, with no safe place to go, and many more face the same prospect in 2014.

Billions of dollars in promised aid remain un-disbursed, and international aid groups have been slow to arrive because of a lack of confidence in the government.



Iran's heavy water nuclear facility near the central city of Arak is shown in January 2011. Iran and the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council plus Germany have agreed to start implementing the terms of an interim deal over the Islamic Republic's contested nuclear program.

Nearly 700,000 suspected cases of cholera have been detected, some 8,500 victims have died and the epidemic still rages.

Progress has come in fits and starts. The government is not all-powerful. Martelly and Prime Minister Laurent Lamothe cannot wave a magic wand and resolve all the issues blocking the pace of recovery, but they are not helpless, either.

If Lamothe wants the international community to "trust us, give us the benefit of the doubt" — as he told Miami Herald reporter Jacqueline Charles in an interview — when it comes to receiving and disbursing aid funds, he must work harder to gain that trust by improving the transparency of his government.

The failure to hold elections has done much to tarnish Haiti's political class and undermine confidence in the government. The voting has been delayed for more than two years, which is simply unacceptable.

On this fourth anniversary of the earthquake, the Obama administration could take no better action to demonstrate its avowed concern for Haiti than to make good on its promise.

Polio remains a threat The New York Times

It has been three years since the last new case of polio was reported in India. The country can now be declared polio-free.

India's victory is an important milestone in the global effort to eliminate polio. In 2013, just 250 people were paralyzed by polio.

But the viral disease remains a threat. The World Health Organization reported 359 new polio cases as of Dec. 10, 2013, up from 213 in December 2012. And the number of countries where polio is present rose to eight from four between December 2012 and December 2013, with polio spreading out of Nigeria into the Horn of Africa and from Pakistan into the Middle East. Violent conflict and distrust of vaccination programs are to blame.

Cases of polio in Pakistan, where skepticism of vaccination efforts remains after the revelation that the United States Central Intelligence Agency used a fake vaccination program in its hunt for Osama bin Laden, rose to 85 in 2013 from 58 in 2012. The WHO also reported 17 confirmed cases and 60 suspected cases of polio in 2013 in and along the borders of war-torn Syria, a country that had been free of polio for 14 years.

With eradication of polio so close, these nations need to redouble efforts to combat the disease. India can play a vital role. It

has welcomed experts from polio-affected countries and has sent medical officers to Nigeria to help with eradication initiatives there.

Pakistan is also enhancing its efforts. It has raised the salaries of vaccinators, created police and army escorts to ensure their safety and enlisted mullahs and imams to calm fears that vaccination is a Western plot.

In the most violent polio-affected areas, warring factions and rebel groups must be persuaded to embrace Unicef's strategy where they agree to cease hostilities long enough for health workers to reach vulnerable populations. India's technical and logistical success and Pakistan's efforts to enlist trusted local leaders are important examples to follow.

All of those tactics will be necessary to eradicate polio in 2014 and to ensure that by 2018 this terrible virus is gone for good.

Important step on Iran's nukes The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Negotiations on Iran's nuclear program and the international economic sanctions against it took another step forward Sunday as the two sides reached agreement on a starter deal.

The United States has three negotiations going, all related to the Middle East. Those are the Israeli-Palestinian talks, the Syrian peace talks set to begin in Switzerland Jan. 22 and the Iran discussions.

The agreement reached in Geneva, with Secretary of State John Kerry leading the U.S. delegation, contains a complex series of measures, but the basic thrust is that Iran will freeze its nuclear program and accept extensive inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency while the other countries involved take steps to ease the economic pressures on Iran.

All of it is subject to reversal and all of it is temporary, with the truly difficult negotiations still ahead. At the same time, the accord that has been reached is an important step in reducing Iran's nuclear threat to Israel and its Middle Eastern neighbors. On the other side, it eases up on the punitive actions the United States and other Western countries have imposed on Iran's leaders and its 80 million people.

Opposition to the agreement exists in both the United States and Iran from hardliners. In Washington they are influenced by part of the lobby for Israel, which opposes any measure it considers to be a concession to Iran, even if it involves placing strict limits on that country's nuclear program. In Iran, opposition comes from

the element in its politics that still seeks to promote hatred of America.

Fortunately, discouraging Congress from hamstringing Kerry's negotiations by putting new sanctions on Iran is the presence of the world's major powers with the United States on the international side of the table: China, France, Germany, Russia and the United Kingdom.

This is a positive development for peace in the Middle East, as well as an opening in U.S.-Iranian relations, which have been frozen since 1979. It was welcomed significantly in an interview with Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum, prime minister of the United Arab Emirates, a Sunni Muslim state and an American ally. Everyone else should see it as good news, too.

Anti-abortion cycle renewed The Arizona Republic

After 41 years of court challenges to Roe vs. Wade, American abortion law is becoming a dense thicket of case law that makes tea-leaf reading difficult when jurists decline to explain their decisions.

That is what happened on Monday when the U.S. Supreme Court decided not to hear a case involving an Arizona law limiting when a woman could seek an abortion.

Last May, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals overturned a federal judge's ruling that Arizona's 2012 law House Bill 2036 was constitutional.

In its decision, the appeals court panel noted that "controlling Supreme Court precedent" forbids states from denying women the right to an abortion "at any point prior to viability."

Viability — the ability to survive outside the womb — is generally considered to occur at 22 to 24 weeks, not at 20 weeks.

The appeals-court decision affects only Arizona, however.

At least 19 other states have laws that ban abortions at 20 weeks, and those laws will remain in effect. If that seems confusing, it should.

It may be that Arizona's law pushed the viability envelope a bit too far. The law is structured so that, in practice, it could affect pregnancies that are only 18 weeks along.

Regardless, we know what the outcome of this nondiscision by the high court will be: The process will begin anew.

Advocates who oppose abortion already have declared their intent to bring a new proposal to the Legislature, where it's likely to pass.

Then, it is off to the courts once again. Lawyers need not fear unemployment.

Frazz



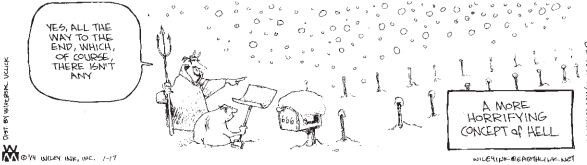
Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



Candorville



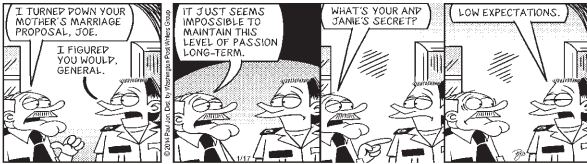
Get Fuzzy



Doonesbury



Fort Knox



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6		7	8	9	10	11
12				13				14				
15				16				17				
18				19								
20				21				22			23	24
				27	28			29	30			
31	32	33						34				
35						36		37				
38						39	40			41	42	43
						45				46		47
48	49	50	51								52	
53								54			55	
56								57			58	

ACROSS

- 1 "NCIS" network
- 4 Astronaut Grissom
- 7 Oyster's gift
- 12 Knock
- 13 Gorilla
- 14 Pain book, "Going —"
- 15 Bobby of hockey lore
- 16 Pianist's timekeeper
- 18 Mine output
- 19 Pry
- 20 Requisite
- 22 "CSI" evidence
- 23 Start a garden
- 27 "Of course"
- 29 Courage
- 31 In any way
- 34 15-Across' disks
- 35 Gold, silver and bronze

58 Conger or moray

26 Moines lead-in

DOWN

- 1 Sing like Bing
- 2 Wilkes —, Pa.
- 3 Binge
- 4 Shapely legs
- 5 Tips over
- 6 Attack
- 7 Item on stage
- 8 A billion years
- 9 Way back when
- 10 Mojito ingredient
- 11 Tommy — Jones
- 17 Wander
- 21 "Like a Rolling Stone" singer
- 23 Bearcat maker
- 24 List-ending abbr.
- 25 Wapiti
- 28 Right angle
- 30 Green org.
- 31 Pump up the volume
- 32 Ball-bearing item
- 33 Noshed
- 36 Stuff like that
- 37 Check payee, at times
- 40 Hill
- 42 Match
- 43 Nary a soul
- 44 Mountain air?
- 45 Grand-scale
- 48 Witticism
- 49 Outback bird
- 50 Earthrow M&Ms
- 51 Singer DiFranco

Answer to Previous Puzzle

A	D	Z	B	E	E	F	S	L	E	D
L	E	O	U	V	E	A	H	A	R	E
F	O	O	T	B	A	L	A	R	I	A
			T	U	B		S	L	A	N
H	U	S	T	L	E	S	U	N		
E	M	U	E	G	G	F	O	R	D	S
A	B	I	T	O	U	T	N	O	A	H
L	O	T	U	S	M	A	C	O	H	O
			T	I	T	J	O	S	T	L
D	E	C	O	R	U	M	S	O	B	
O	V	E	R	B	O	O	T	L	E	G
R	I	D	E	E	L	B	A	E	N	E
P	L	E	D	S	T	I	R	R	U	E

I-17

CRYPTOQUIP

BI UQK LN-GUOP NI "ZNJK
GUNPC" BG QOJBDX OD
KRNUBNDZOZ NSUHSFGU, QK

RBXQU HK LPCBD' N'DKOZ.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I'VE HEARD THAT COMPANIES ARE ADDING AROMAS TO CERTAIN DEVICES AND CALLING THEM "SMELLPHONES."
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: B equals I

BUSINESS/WEATHER

Apple to refund \$32.5M for kids' buys

By JENNIFER C. KERR
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Plenty of parents have been there — handing over the iPhone or iPad to a child while waiting in the doctor's office, standing in line at Starbucks or sitting in the car for a long road trip with the family. The youngster is playing a game on a fun mobile app and then hands you the phone saying he needs your password. Next thing

you know, there's a charge on your credit card from Apple.

Too often, parents were caught unaware that by entering their password they were authorizing purchases of virtual pet treats, coins or perhaps a way to advance to the game's next level, the Federal Trade Commission said Wednesday in announcing that Apple Inc. had agreed to refund at least \$32.5 million to unsuspecting parents.

"You cannot charge consum-

ers for purchases they did not authorize," said Edith Ramirez, the commission chairwoman.

The FTC received tens of thousands of consumer complaints. As part of the settlement, the FTC said Apple also must change its billing practices to make it more obvious that an actual purchase is taking place during the course of the game or app.

Apple CEO Tim Cook said the Cupertino, Calif.-based company related to the FTC because the

consent decree "does not require us to do anything we weren't already going to do, so we decided to accept it rather than tangle on a long and distracting legal fight."

One parent told the FTC her daughter had spent \$2,600 in "Tap Pet Hotel," in which children can build their own pet lodgings. The game is free to download and play, but it takes in-app purchases for bowls of treats and sacks of coins for the game.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Jan. 17)	\$1.3990
Dollar buys (Jan. 17)	€0.7148
British pound (Jan. 17)	\$1.68
Japanese yen (Jan. 17)	102.00
South Korean won (Jan. 17)	1,036.00

Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3771
British pound	\$1.6359/6.113
Canada (dollar)	1.0919
China (Yuan)	0.6560
Denmark (Krone)	5.4752
Egypt (Pound)	2.8645
Euro	\$1.3629/7.737
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7547
Hungary (Forint)	220.58
Israel (Shekel)	3.4904
Japan (Yen)	102.00
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.2835
Lebanon (Pound)	1,668.33
Philippines (Peso)	45.16
Poland (Zloty)	3.10
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7506
Singapore (Dollar)	1.2725
South Korea (Won)	1,063.99
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9057
Thailand (Baht)	32.78
Turkey (New Lira)	2.0048

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., those provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	3.25
Discount rate	3.75
Federal funds market rate	0.07
3-month bill	0.04
30-year bond	3.82

EUROPE GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Germany	\$3.564	\$3.742	\$3.520	\$4.123
Change in price	-0.5 cents	-0.8 cents	-0.7 cents	-2.4 cents
Netherlands	---	\$4.691	\$4.987	\$5.035
Change in price	---	-0.2 cents	+0.2 cents	-4.3 cents
U.K.	---	\$3.677	\$3.855	\$4.058
Change in price	---	-0.8 cents	-0.7 cents	-2.4 cents
Azores	---	---	\$4.482	---
Change in price	---	---	no change	---
U.K.	---	\$4.876	\$4.029	\$4.287
Change in price	---	no change	no change	no change
Turkey	---	---	\$4.445	\$3.991
Change in price	---	---	no change	-2.4 cents
Italy	\$3.936	---	---	\$4.271
Change in price	no change	---	---	no change

PACIFIC GAS PRICES

Country	Unleaded	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Japan	---	\$3.499	---	\$3.879
Change in price	---	-1.0 cents	---	-2.0 cents
Okinawa	\$3.519	---	---	\$3.879
Change in price	no change	---	---	-2.0 cents
South Korea	\$3.579	\$4.039	\$4.139	---
Change in price	-1.0 cents	-1.0 cents	-3.0 cents	---
Guam	\$3.579**	\$3.740	\$3.929	---
Change in price	-1.0 cents	-1.0 cents	-1.0 cents	---

* Diesel EFD ** Midgrade

For the week of Jan. 18-24

MARKET WATCH

Jan. 15, 2014

Dow Jones
Industrials

+108.08

16,481.94

Nasdaq
composite

+31.87

4,214.88

Standard &
Poor's 500

+9.50

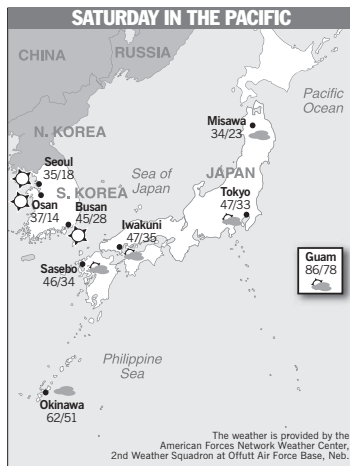
1,848.38

Russell

+7.53

1,170.95

WEATHER OUTLOOK



Friday's US temperatures

City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	City	Hi	Lo	Wthr	City	Hi	Lo	Wthr
Able, Tex	56	28	Cir	Chatanooga	41	29	Cir	Fort Wayne	25	18	Cir	Louisville	28	26	Cir
Akron, Ohio	51	23	Snow	Cheyenne	48	22	Cir	Fresno	69	36	Cir	Lubbock	56	24	Cir
Albany, N.Y.	41	24	Cir	Cincinnati	19	14	Cir	Goodland	52	21	PCldy	Macon	52	30	Cir
Albuquerque	55	27	Cir	Cleveland	30	24	Cir	Grand Junction	39	14	Cir	Madison	69	43	Cir
Allentown, Pa.	41	25	Cir	Colorado Springs	53	20	Cir	Great Falls	53	33	PCldy	Memphis	36	29	Cir
Amarillo	54	24	Cir	Columbia, S.C.	52	29	PCldy	Green Bay	19	16	Cir	Miami Beach	69	43	Cir
Anchorage	37	30	Rain	Columbus, Ga.	50	32	Cir	Greensboro, N.C.	47	27	Cir	Midland-Odessa	59	25	Cir
Asheville	40	23	Cir	Columbus, Ohio	30	28	Cir	Harrisburg	46	26	Snow	Milwaukee	19	15	Cir
Atlanta	42	22	Cir	Concord, N.H.	39	25	Cir	Hartford Spfld	45	26	PCldy	Mpls-St Paul	12	2	PCldy
Atlantic City	47	26	Cir	Corpus Christi	68	47	Cir	Helena	44	25	PCldy	Missoula	33	21	Cir
Austin	63	39	Cir	Dallas-Ft Worth	58	35	Cir	Honolulu	82	67	Cir	Mobile	82	67	Cir
Baltimore	44	28	Cir	Dayton	26	24	Cir	Houston	61	41	Cir	Montgomery	49	31	Cir
Baton Rouge	58	39	Cir	Daytona Beach	67	34	Cir	Huntsville	38	29	Cir	Nashville	32	29	Cir
Bilings	50	31	Cir	Denver	52	21	Cir	Indianapolis	24	18	Cir	New Orleans	60	42	Cir
Birmingham	42	31	Cir	Des Moines	22	7	PCldy	Jackson, Miss.	51	31	Cir	New York City	44	31	Cir
Bismarck	35	4	Cir	Detroit	27	24	Cir	Jacksonville	61	31	PCldy	Newark	46	31	Cir
Boise	40	26	Cir	Duluth	10	-1	Cir	Juneau	43	37	Rain	Norfolk, Va.	50	30	PCldy
Boston	45	29	Cir	El Paso	62	31	Cir	Kansas City	27	14	Cir	North Platte	49	12	PCldy
Bridgport	45	29	Cir	Elkins	33	23	Snow	Key West	66	52	PCldy	Oklahoma City	50	27	PCldy
Brownsville	71	52	PCldy	Erie	32	29	Cir	Knoxville	40	28	Cir	Omaha	29	10	PCldy
Buffalo	36	28	Cir	Eugene	44	28	Cir	Lake Charles	58	41	PCldy	Orlando	67	34	PCldy
Burlington, Vt.	43	23	Cir	Evansville	32	22	Cir	Lansing	25	22	Cir	Paducah	26	25	Cir
Caribou, Maine	34	24	Cir	Fairbanks	17	3	Cir	Las Vegas	69	43	Cir	Pendleton	44	26	Cir
Charleston, S.C.	56	32	PCldy	Fargo	16	-10	Cir	Lexington	29	26	Cir	Peoria	15	8	Cir
Charleston, W.Va.	56	32	PCldy	Flagstaff	51	18	Cir	Lincoln	36	10	PCldy	Philadelphia	45	31	Cir
Charlotte, N.C.	48	28	Cir	Flint	27	21	Cir	Little Rock	40	28	Cir	Phoenix	77	46	Cir
				Fort Smith	43	28	Cir	Los Angeles	82	52	Cir	Pittsburgh	31	23	Cir

The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

National temperature extremes
Hi: Wed., 90, Fullerton, Calif., and Camp Pendleton, Calif.
Lo: Wed., -24, Crane Lake, Minn.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Roundup

No. 4 Michigan St. rolls over Northwestern

The Associated Press

EVANSTON, Ill. — Gary Harris sees the wins piling up for No. 4 Michigan State. What he doesn't see is a finished product.

The Spartans hardly looked like one against Northwestern on Wednesday night. They still prevailed 54-40, with Harris scoring 14 points to lead them to their ninth straight victory.

"We know that we weren't playing as well as we can offensively," Harris said. "We had to do something defensively to kind of get us going. Get stops and get the lead. That's what we did. That's how we pulled away from them."

The preseason favorite to win the Big Ten, the Spartans (16-1, 5-0) continue to roll along, although it was hardly an easy night for them. They overcame a sluggish start and pulled away down the stretch even though they struggled in a big way from the outside.

They were 2-for-16 on three-pointers with six airballs, by coach Tom Izzo's count. Harris missed all six from long range and Keith Appling was 0-for-3. Harris did have four steals, and Appling managed to score 11 points.

Branden Dawson, fighting an illness, had 11 rebounds and three blocks, and the Spartans came away with the win even though they were missing one of their top players, Adreian Payne. The 6-foot-10 forward sat out his second straight game because of a sprained right foot.

The Dumps did his best to keep Northwestern (8-10, 1-4) in the game, scoring 10 of his 12 points in the second half. But leading scorer Drew Crawford never got going. He managed just six points with Denzel Valentine guarding him most of the game.

No. 9 Oklahoma St. 82, TCU 50: Marcus Smart scored 20 points to help the host Cowboys

defeat the Horned Frogs.

Smart, the reigning Big 12 player of the week, also had eight rebounds and five assists for the Cowboys (15-2, 3-1).

Markel Brown scored 14 points and Le'Bryan Nash added 13 points and eight rebounds for Oklahoma State, which needed to win to stay within range of Big 12 leader Kansas. The 15th-ranked Jayhawks (4-0 Big 12) host the Cowboys on Saturday.

No. 10 San Diego St. 68, Fresno St. 60: Xavier Thames scored 28 points and Winston Shepard keyed a 12-2 run for the host Aztecs, who rallied past the Bulldogs for their 14th straight win.

The Aztecs (15-1, 4-0 Mountain West), who often looked ragged, won their 38th consecutive game against a team from California.

Texas Tech 82, No. 12 Baylor 72: Jaye Crockett had 19 points, Toddrick Gotcher added 17 and the host Red Raiders beat the Bears for their first Big 12 win of the season.

Dejan Kravic and Robert Turner scored 14 apiece for the Red Raiders (9-8, 1-3), who led all the way and ended a four-game slide against Baylor in Lubbock.

Kenny Chery scored 22 points for the Bears (13-3, 1-2).

No. 16 Massachusetts 88, George Mason 87: Chaz Williams had 26 points and eight assists, Derrick Gordon made a 4-on-4 layup with 8 seconds remaining and the visiting Minutemen edged the Patriots.

The Minutemen (15-1, 3-0 Atlantic 10) rallied from eight points down in the second half to win their fifth straight.

No. 24 Saint Louis 66, St. Bonaventure 60: Dwayne Evans scored 18 points and the host Billikens won their first game since breaking into the Top 25 for the first time this season, holding off the Bonnies.



NAN W. HUN/AP

Michigan State guard Gary Harris, right, drives to the basket as Northwestern guard JerShon Cobb defends against him during the first half of Wednesday's game in Evanston, Ill.

Jordair Jett scored 10 of his 15 points in the second half for Saint Louis (16-2, 3-0 Atlantic 10), which has won 10 in a row. The start is the school's best since the 1993-94 team was 19-1.

Air Force 77, San Jose State 62: Tre' Coggins scored 27 points and Marek Olesinski added 19 as the host Falcons pulled away in the latter part of the second half

to beat the Spartans.

Air Force (9-7, 3-2 Mountain West Conference) shot 56.8 percent from the field, with Coggins hitting 9 of 13 field goals and Olesinski sinking 7 of 11.

Both Coggins and Olesinski were 5-for-8 on three-pointers as the Falcons hit 12 of 26 from beyond the arc.

San Jose State (6-11, 0-5) trailed

just 55-55 with less than 8½ minutes to play but Air Force closed the game on a 19-7 run.

Kamryn Williams added 11 points for the Falcons, who outrebounded San Jose State 34-21.

Holy Cross 78, Army 75: Malcolm Miller scored six of his 17 points with less than three minutes to play as the Crusaders overcame a 14-point deficit to defeat the host Black Knights.

Army had its largest lead, 63-49 with 9:45 remaining. Holy Cross answered with a 21-6 run to take its first lead of the second half, 70-69 with 3:13 left. Miller scored twice and his two free throws gave the Crusaders a 76-73 lead with 31 seconds left. Justin Burrell and Anthony Thompson each made one of two free throws to cap the scoring for Holy Cross (8-9, 2-3 Patriot League).

Tanner Plomb hit a career-high six three-pointers on his way to a career-best 29 points to lead Army (8-8, 4-1). Dylan Cox, who scored eight of the last 10 points for the Black Knights, finished with 11 points.

Navy 62, Bucknell 61: Brandon Venturini scored 14 points as the host Midshipmen withstood a late charge by the Bison to escape with a win.

Navy (7-9, 2-3 Patriot League) led 62-51 with 3:01 to play after a Kendall Knorr layup.

But Bucknell (8-8, 3-2) responded immediately, with Chris Haas' three-pointer drawing the Bison back to eight. Brian Fitzpatrick and Steven Kaspar both made layups and Haas drilled another three-pointer to draw Bucknell within one with 54 seconds remaining.

Navy clinched the game when James Loupos pulled down a rebound of a Haas three-point attempt as time expired.

Worth Smith added 13 points for the Midshipmen and Zach Fong had 10.

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NHL/SPORTS BRIEFS

NHL roundup

Ducks net record 9 goals

The Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Although Teemu Selanne has been playing in the NHL for more than two decades, he had never seen anything he could even compare to the goonery in the Anaheim Ducks' latest victory.

The Vancouver Canucks' third-period antics aside, the NHL also hasn't seen much like these Ducks as they cut a swath through the league on their merciless winning streak.

Corey Perry had two goals and two assists, Selanne had two goals and an assist, and the steam-rolling Ducks beat Vancouver 9-1 Wednesday night for their 18th victory in 19 games.

Nick Bonino scored also two goals for the NHL-leading Ducks, who earned their eighth consecutive victory by scoring a club-record six power-play goals against the NHL's best penalty-killing team. The Ducks got those opportunities thanks to a wholesale collapse by the Canucks, who picked up 58 penalty minutes in the third period with several old-school hockey attempts to start a brawl.

With four Canucks in the dressing room for misconduct, Vancouver gave a late seven-minute, two-man advantage to the Ducks, who scored twice to wrap up the highest-scoring performance in the franchise's two-decade history.

"What happened at the end, I haven't really seen before," said Selanne, who scored his 682nd career goal during the two-man advantage. "It was kind of weird. You don't want to finish the game like that ... but this is still a confidence boost for us. They're a great team."

Andrew Coglian, Jakob Silfverberg and Sami Vatanen also scored, and Frederik Andersen made 31 saves as Anaheim joined the 1967-68 Montreal Canadiens as the only teams in league history to win 18 times in a 19-game span.

Vatanen's score with 38 seconds left pushed the Ducks past the club-record eight goals, accomplished twice previously.

Penguins 4, Capitals 3: Olli Maatta's slap shot beat Michal Neuvirth with less than 2 minutes remaining to rally host Pittsburgh for the victory.

Maatta's fourth goal of the season gave Pittsburgh its only lead as the Penguins won their 13th straight home game, a club record.

Maple Leafs 4, Sabres 3 (SO): Tyler Bozak scored the clinching goal in the third round of the shootout and host Toronto won its third straight by beating Buffalo.

James Van Riemsdyk, Joffrey Lupul and Bozak scored in the shootout for Toronto.

NHL scoreboards

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division									
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	SV%	PP%	PK%
Boston	46	28	15	2	60	132	102		
Tampa Bay	47	26	15	4	60	136	113		
Montreal	47	26	16	5	57	118	111		
Toronto	49	24	20	5	53	136	149		
Detroit	46	20	16	10	50	118	127		
Ottawa	47	21	18	8	50	134	146		
Florida	46	18	21	7	43	109	141		
Buffalo	46	13	27	6	32	83	129		

Metropolitan Division									
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	SV%	PP%	PK%
Pittsburgh	46	34	12	70	156	115			
Philadelphia	47	24	19	4	52	125			
Washington	47	22	17	8	50	140			
N.Y. Rangers	48	24	21	3	51	119			
New Jersey	46	20	18	10	50	118			
Columbus	46	22	20	4	48	129			
Carolina	46	19	18	9	47	111			
N.Y. Islanders	48	18	23	7	43	132			

Western Conference

Central Division									
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	SV%	PP%	PK%
Chicago	46	29	12	5	69	163	100		
St. Louis	45	32	8	5	69	163	100		
Vancouver	46	25	12	5	55	115			
Minnesota	49	25	19	5	55	118			
Dallas	46	21	18	7	49	132			
Dallas	46	20	21	7	47	113			
Winnipeg	48	20	25	5	45	135			

Pacific Division									
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA	SV%	PP%	PK%
Anaheim	49	36	8	5	77	170	120		
San Jose	47	29	12	6	64	150	117		
Los Angeles	47	28	14	5	61	120			
Vancouver	48	15	9	5	57	124			
Phoenix	46	21	16	9	53	135			
Calgary	47	16	25	6	38	105			
Edmonton	49	15	29	3	41	174			

NOTE: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss.

Wednesday's games

Toronto 4, Buffalo 3 (SO)

Pittsburgh 4, Washington 3 (Anzeimer)

Thursday's games

Detroit at N.Y. Rangers

Nashville at Philadelphia

Montreal at Ottawa

San Jose at Tampa Bay

San Jose at Florida

N.Y. Islanders at St. Louis

Edmonton at Minnesota

San Jose at Dallas

New Jersey at Colorado

Washington at Calgary

Vancouver at Columbus

Anaheim at Chicago

Friday's games

Washington at Columbus

Anaheim at Chicago

Wednesday

Ducks 9, Canucks 1

Canucks	0	1	0-1
Anaheim	2	4	3-9
First Period—1. Anaheim, Connor (Silfverberg, Koliu); 4:27, 2. Anaheim, Selanne (Vatanen, Perry); 5:08 (pp.). Anaheim, Bonino 15 (Getzlaf, Perry); 14:34 (pp.). Anaheim, Silfverberg (Perrault, Beaudemin); 15:29 (pp.). 7. Vancouver, Kariya (Lindholm); 19:58 (pp.).			
Second Period—3. Anaheim, Perry 27 (Getzlaf); 10:54. Anaheim, Selanne 7 (Getzlaf, Leveque); 14:06 (pp.). Anaheim, Vatanen 6 (Fristic, Selanne); 19:22 (pp.).			
Third Period—4. Vancouver, Selanne 11 (2-13-34). Canucks, Eriksson 11 (3-13-33). Canucks, Anderson 11 (2-3-32).			
Goalie—Vancouver: Lack 8-5-3 (13 shots; 10 saves). Canucks: Selanne 31-25. Anaheim, Anderson 11-2 (3-32).			

Maple Leafs 4, Sabres 3 (SO)

Buffalo	1	2	0-4
Toronto	2	0	0-4

Toronto won shootout 3-1

First Period—1. Toronto, Kessel 22 (9:21).

Second Period—2. Buffalo, Ellis 2 (Myers, Pysky); 3:21. 3. Buffalo, Moulson 15, 6:34. 4. Toronto, Kullen 6 (Holland), 7:23. 5. Toronto, Rielly 1 (Kalen, Raymond); 11:22.

Third Period—5. Buffalo, Hodgson 10 (Ernst, Elbro); 23 (pp.).

Shootout—Buffalo 1 (Moulson G. Hooton No. 1). Toronto 3 (van Riemsdyk G. Lupul G. Bozak G.).

Missed Penalty Shot—Girgensons, But, 5:48 second.

Shots on Goal—Buffalo 8-10-11-30.

Toronto 12-8-14-35-39.

Power-play opportunities—Buffalo 1 of 2. Toronto 0 of 2.

Goalies—Buffalo, Miller 12-18-2 (39 shots; 36 saves). Toronto, Reimer 9-6-1 (30-27).

A-19,372 (18,819). T-2:52.

Penguins 4, Capitals 3

Washington	1	1	1-3
Pittsburgh	3	1	0-4

First Period—1. Washington, Laich 5 (Alzner); 13:09 (sh).

Second Period—2. Pittsburgh, Letang 9 (Crosby, Glass); 9:53. 3. Washington, Chiasson 1 (Johnson, Miller); 14:31. 4. Pittsburgh, Pyatt 1 (Maatta, Jokinen); 16:08.

Third Period—5. Washington, Ovechkin 3 (Johnson, Green); 8:55. 6. Pittsburgh, Jokinen 16 (Sutter, Niskanen); 11:28. 7. Pittsburgh, Maatta 4 (Malkin, Niskanen); 16:08.

Shootout—Washington 10-13-5.

Goalies—Washington 17-8-12-37.

Power-play opportunities—Washington 0 of 2; Pittsburgh 0 of 3.

Goalies—Washington, Neuvirth 3-4-1 (37-30-33 saves). Pittsburgh, Fleury 27-10-1 (28-25).

A-18,667 (18,387). T-2:20.



MARK J. TERRILL/AP

Starting pitcher Clayton Kershaw has reportedly reached a 7-year, \$215 million deal with the Dodgers.

Briefly

Kershaw gets \$215M deal

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Clayton Kershaw agreed Wednesday to a \$215 million, seven-year contract with the Los Angeles Dodgers, a person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press, a deal that makes the two-time Cy Young Award winner baseball's first player with a \$30 million average salary.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the agreement had not yet been announced. Kershaw receives the most lucrative deal for a pitcher, breaking the mark of \$180 million set by Justin Verlander last March for his seven-year contract with Detroit.

Kershaw would have been eligible for free agency after the upcoming season if the new deal hadn't been reached. He was eligible for salary arbitration, and those figures were set to be exchanged on Friday. He was coming off a two-year, \$20 million deal that included \$200,000 in bonuses in 2012, a \$500,000 escalator to his 2013 base salary, and \$300,000 in bonuses last year.

The average salary of \$30.7 million tops the previous high of \$27.5 million, set by the New York Yankees' Alex Rodriguez as part of a 10-year agreement from December 2007.

A-Rod says suspension 'could be a big help'

MEXICO CITY — Alex Rodriguez says his season-long suspension could be a benefit, allowing him to rest and return to the Yankees for the final three years of his contract.

Speaking late Wednesday during a promotional appearance, Rodriguez declined to talk specifically about his suspension for violating baseball's drug agreement and labor contract.

Rodriguez said he wanted to end his career with New York. Yankees managing general partner Hal Steinbrenner has declined to talk about his possible return but has called him a "great

player."

"The 2014 season could be a big help for me," Rodriguez said. "It might serve as a break and close the chapter, and begin in 2015 with my last three years under contract with the Yankees."

Price agrees to 1 year, \$14M deal with Rays

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Three-time AL All-Star David Price and the Tampa Bay Rays have agreed to a \$14 million, one-year contract, the highest single-season salary in franchise history.

The 2012 Cy Young Award winner had been the subject of trade speculation after going 10-8 with a 3.33 ERA last year while earning \$10,112,500. He is eligible for free agency after the 2015 season.

Police: Hernandez eyed in 2012 double slaying

BRISTOL, Conn. — Boston police have been investigating whether jailed former New Eng-

land Patriot Aaron Hernandez may have been the gunman in a 2012 double slaying, according to a search warrant request released Thursday.

Hernandez, who is awaiting trial on murder charges in a 2013 shooting near his home, was seen on surveillance footage in the same nightclub as the victims the night of the attack in Boston's South End, authorities have said. But the newly released documents confirm for the first time that police suspect Hernandez could have pulled the trigger.

No charges have been filed in the deaths of Daniel Jorge Correia de Abreu and Saffro Teixeira Furtado, who were killed on July 16, 2012, when somebody inside an SUV opened fire on their car. A third person survived.

In the affidavit and search warrant application released by Superior Court in Bristol, Conn., police write that there is probable cause to believe that Hernandez was driving the vehicle used in the shooting and "may have been the shooter."

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OLYMPICS



Mike Groll/AP

Budding U.S. aerials star Ashley Caldwell considers herself a grizzled veteran after tearing the ACLs in both of her knees in a span of 363 days between 2011-12, though the injuries have done little to deter her from keeping her sights set on Sochi.

US aerialist Caldwell never let focus waver after torn ACLs

By WILL GRAVES
The Associated Press

Ashley Caldwell felt her left leg twist underneath her as she hit the ground. She heard the pop in her knee as the ACL ripped to shreds and understood right away what it meant.

Another long rehab. Another season of competition lost. Another hurdle in the budding aerialist's increasingly long path to Sochi.

But mostly the thought that kept running through the mind of ever blunt, ever optimistic Caldwell as she lay on the snow in Park City, Utah on Dec. 20, 2012 was, "Are you serious?"

"I felt gypped," Caldwell said with a combination of sarcasm and exasperation.

A year earlier Caldwell had torn the ACL in her right knee at the same venue. Now here she was, 363 days later, at the bottom of the same hill with the same searing pain in the one good knee she had left.

Forgive her if she can't help but laugh at the absurdity of it all.

"I had worked so hard, I came back, I qualified for jumps," she said. "I'm at the

'I felt gypped ... I had worked so hard, I came back, I qualified for jumps ... It felt like it was very unfair.'

Ashley Caldwell
US Olympic aerialist

point where I'm not scared and I felt really confident and now here I am looking at going through the whole process again. It felt like it was very unfair."

And maybe unavoidable.

When Caldwell went in for her second surgery, her doctor admitted the channel for her right anterior cruciate ligament was so shallow, he figured there was a better than 50/50 chance she'd end up on the operating table again with the ACL in her left knee ripped to pieces. He took no joy in being right.

Funny, Caldwell has kind of enjoyed proving the doubters — including the ones inside her own head — wrong.

A month away from Sochi, Caldwell is in the mix to make her second U.S. Olympic team, just like she always planned after

finishing 10th in Vancouver four years ago.

A top-three finish at either Deer Valley, Colo., Val St. Come in Canada or Lake Placid, N.Y., over the next 10 days would make Caldwell a virtual lock to head to Russia. She's done her best to block out the math. If she jumps well, she knows she'll go. If she doesn't, she'll just end up watching it on TV.

It'll hurt, but then again, she's gotten used to managing expectations. If Russia doesn't work out, there's South Korea in 2018 to think about, or the 2022 Games for that matter.

"Nothing is guaranteed," Caldwell said. "I don't think my chances are lower, but I know have to work harder than most if I want to get there."



Carlo Allegri/AP

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NBA



Heat forward LeBron James, front, falls after his shot was blocked by Wizards forward Nene in the first half Wednesday in Washington.

Roundup

Wizards rout Heat in Oden's return

The Associated Press — Raise your hand if you had Greg Oden as the Miami Heat MVP. Or if you had any inkling the Washington Wizards were capable of taking a 34-point lead against the three-time defending champs.

Or if you thought LeBron James and Co. would follow a White House visit by dropping their third straight against the heart of the middling Eastern Conference.

Oden played his first game in more than four years Wednesday night, and that might have been the only positive for the Heat. He played all of 8 minutes, 24 seconds and made a pair of dunks to help start a rally that had loads of promise — until it fell flat in the fourth quarter of a 114-97 loss to the Wizards on Wednesday night.

"They came here, whatever. Went to the White House, whatever," Wizards forward Nene said. "We just came here to play."

John Wall scored 25 points, and Bradley Beal and Nene had 19 pieces to lead seven players in double figures for the Wizards, who had their lead cut to nine before closing with a 17-9 run. They had dropped seven of eight at the Verizon Center.

Chris Bosh scored 26 points, and James had 25 for the Heat, who had been off since Friday and therefore had time to be fed by President Barack Obama on Tuesday for winning a second consecutive NBA title.

It was Oden's first appearance in a regular-season game since fracturing his left kneecap while playing for the Portland Trail Blazers. The No. 1 overall pick in the 2007 Draft also missed what would have been his rookie year because of a right knee injury. He has had three microfracture surgeries on his knees.

Kings 128, Timberwolves 108 — Rudy Gay had 33 points, five rebounds and six assists, and Isaiah Thomas had 26 points to lead the Wizards.

Celtics 88, Raptors 83 — Jared Sullinger scored 25 points and grabbed a career-best 20 rebounds, Avery Bradley had 20 points and host Boston held on to snap a nine-game losing streak.

76ers 95, Bobcats 92 — Thaddeus Young made the go-ahead three-pointer with 2.2 seconds left to host Philadelphia.

Clippers 128, Magic 125 (3 OT) — Jooking Noah had a season-high 26 points, Carlos Boozer scored

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	19	19	.514	
Brooklyn	15	25	.405	4
New York	25	15	.625	
Boston	14	26	.350	9
Philadelphia	14	26	.350	9

Southeast Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Miami	17	21	.446	
Atlanta	17	21	.446	
Washington	18	19	.484	
Charlotte	14	24	.366	8
Orlando	10	29	.256	17 1/2

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Indiana	19	7	.811	
Chicago	18	9	.667	12
Detroit	16	22	.419	16 1/2
Cleveland	14	25	.359	17
Milwaukee	7	31	.184	23 1/2

Western Conference				
Southwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	31	8	.795	
Houston	14	26	.500	11 1/2
Dallas	23	17	.575	8 1/2
Mempis	15	25	.375	11 1/2
New Orleans	15	25	.375	11 1/2

Northwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Portland	29	7	.806	
Oklahoma City	28	10	.737	1
Denver	20	18	.526	7 1/2
Minnesota	18	20	.474	11 1/2
Utah	27	11	.708	1

Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Clippers	23	17	.575	
Golden State	22	18	.550	2
Phoenix	22	17	.565	2
Sacramento	14	25	.359	12 1/2
L.A. Lakers	14	25	.359	12 1/2

Tuesday's games				
Indiana 116, Sacramento 92				
Charlotte 108, New York 98				
Mempis 96, Oklahoma City 87				
Cleveland 120, L.A. Lakers 118				

Wednesday's games				
Chicago 128, Orlando 125, 3OT				
Philadelphia 95, Charlotte 83				
Washington 114, Miami 97				
Boston 88, Toronto 81				
Sacramento 111, Minnesota 108				
Mempis 82, Milwaukee 77				
Houston 103, New Orleans 100				
San Antonio 109, Utah 105				
Phoenix 121, L.A. Lakers 114				
Portland 108, Cleveland 96				
Denver 125, Atlanta 116				
L.A. Clippers 129, Dallas 127				

Thursday's games				
Brooklyn vs. Atlanta at London, Eng.				
New York at Indiana				
Oklahoma City at Houston				
Charlotte at Orlando				
Miami at Philadelphia				
Chicago at Toronto				
L.A. Clippers at New York				
Washington at Dallas				
L.A. Lakers at Boston				
Utah at Detroit				
Sacramento at Memphis				
Portland at San Antonio				
Cleveland at Denver				
Golden State at Oklahoma City				

Friday's games				
Wizards 114, Heat 97				
Trail Blazers 108, Cavaliers 96				
Clippers 128, Magic 125 (3 OT)				
Raptors 83, Celtics 88				
76ers 95, Bobcats 92				
Kings 128, Timberwolves 108				

Saturday's games				
Trail Blazers 108, Cavaliers 96				
Clippers 128, Magic 125 (3 OT)				
Raptors 83, Celtics 88				
76ers 95, Bobcats 92				
Kings 128, Timberwolves 108				

Sunday's games				
Trail Blazers 108, Cavaliers 96				
Clippers 128, Magic 125 (3 OT)				
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Friday's games				
Trail Blazers 108, Cavaliers 96				
Clippers 128, Magic 125 (3 OT)				
Raptors 83, Celtics 88				
76ers 95, Bobcats 92				
Kings 128, Timberwolves 108				

Suns 121, Lakers 114

L.A. LAKERS — Johnson 7-12 2-6, Hill 4-10 0-8, Gasol 10-20 4-5 2-4, Marshall 4-16 0-4 10, Meeke 5-9 3-4, Kelly 1-2 2-2. Total 105-114. 1-19, Kaman 6-7 6-6 18. Totals 105-114.

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AUSTRALIAN OPEN/NFL

Sharapova sweats out win over Knapp

Once-in-a-century heat wave suspends play, but provides little relief for early matches

By DENNIS PASSA
The Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Maria Sharapova was already soaking in ice by the time the extreme weather warning arrived.

It seemed bafflingly late to the four-time major winner, who felt fried after playing for 3½ hours in searing heat to reach the third round of the Australian Open. She didn't know it when she was out on Rod Laver Arena tangling with Karin Knapp on Thursday, but tournament organizers had finally conceded it was unsafe to keep players on court on the third consecutive day of what is shaping as a once-in-a-century heat wave.

Matches were suspended for four hours as temperatures topped 43 Celsius (109 Fahrenheit) before subsiding, but that didn't apply to Sharapova and Knapp because they were already into the third set and the Extreme Heat Policy only kicks in at the end of sets in progress. It was the longest women's match so far in the tournament.

Sharapova thinks it absurd that a vague formula for measuring ambient temperature, wind and humidity leaves the tournament referee as the sole arbiter of extreme heat — without input from the players.

"We have never received any emails or, you know, warnings about the weather or what to do," she told a news conference an hour or so after her 6-3, 4-6, 10-8 win over Knapp.

Then she recalled: "Actually, I did receive one, I think, while I was in the ice bath a few minutes ago — I was like, 'That's a little too late.'"

Not long after tournament director Craig Tiley appeared outdoors in a TV interview, dressed in jacket and tie, to explain how the decisions are reached, Sharapova said organizers should be telling the tour trainers, medical staff, officials and players so that everyone is in the loop.

The only matches that continued in the afternoon were on the two main show courts under closed roofs, which in hindsight was a good thing when the lightning and rain arrived later in the evening to again delay matches on outside courts. It is Melbourne, after all.

Top-ranked Rafael Nadal was pleased to avoid the heat, and the lightning, and the temperatures had dropped by the time two-time defending champion Victoria Azarenka and Wimbledon champion Andy Murray won the featured women's and men's night matches on the outer court.

Roger Federer was content

to find his way out to a second-ary court at Melbourne Park for the first time in a decade so that he could play under the roof on Hisense Arena. He and Nadal played at roughly the same time, also a rarity here, and won in three sets.

Others advancing on the men's side included 2008 finalist Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, No. 11 Milos Ranic, No. 22 Grigor Dimitrov and American Donald Young, who beat No. 24 Andreas Seppi of Italy 6-4, 2-6, 6-3, 4-6, 7-5.

No. 5-ranked Juan Martin del Potro, the 2009 U.S. Open champion, didn't like the late finish. His run as an outside contender to the 'Big Four' ended in a shocking 4-6, 6-3, 5-7, 6-4, 7-5 defeat to Spain's Roberto Bautista Agut at 1:20 a.m. Friday.

The women playing the early matches experienced the worst of the heat Thursday, with No. 11 Simona Halep winning all but one game in the last two sets against American Varvara Lepchenko, who needed treatment and said she was almost delirious.

Caroline Wozniacki highlighted the unpredictable Melbourne weather, describing the conditions as "pleasant" when she played on Rod Laver Arena immediately after Sharapova.



AARON FAVILA/AP

Maria Sharapova applies an ice pack to her head as she attempts to cool down during her second-round match against Karin Knapp at the Australian Open in Melbourne, Australia, on Thursday. The tournament's Extreme Heat Policy went into effect with the temperature hitting 109, but not in time to delay Sharapova's match.

No. 5 Agnieszka Radwanska, No. 8 Jelena Jankovic and No. 13 Sloane Stephens advanced in the relative cool of the evening.

The temperatures were forecast to reach 44 C (111 F) on day five. No. 1-ranked Serena Williams was playing the opening match on Rod Laver Arena on Friday against Daniela Hantuchova, and three-time defending champion Novak Djokovic was playing a night match, when temperatures were expected to drastically drop ahead of the weekend.

The scorching heat has been the talking point all week in Melbourne. Others have described the decision not to suspend matches earlier in temperatures regularly topping 42 C (108 F) as inhumane.

No. 25-seeded Alize Cornet, who plays Sharapova next, sobbed on court after her second-round win, saying "It was an oven. It was burning."

Murray said it was difficult for everyone involved.

"It's not a good place to be in because the heat is bearable — just," he said, adding that the stakeholders needed to discuss the heat rules and make them easier to understand.

"But let's also remember this is the first time it's ever been like this," he said. "I heard it was 100 years they've never had weather like this four days in a row. So you've got to expect that's probably not going to happen again for a while."

Two: Manning will have TE Thomas for Pats rematch

FROM BACK PAGE

"It was deja vu," Elway said on his weekly podcast on the team's website on Tuesday.

As Manning took the snap and stepped up, the pocket began to collapse around him, but he spotted tight end Julius Thomas open along the Broncos sideline. The pass was perfect, as was Thomas' tap dance until his momentum took him out of bounds at the 41.

Then, on third-and-6 from his 45, Manning hit Thomas for a 9-yard gain over the middle with 2:12 left.

A year ago, then-offensive coordinator Mike McCoy called for a run by undersized Ronnie Hillman on third-and-7 at about the same point in the game, which in turn ultimately led to a Baltimore touchdown with 31 seconds left.

This was the ultimate second chance, and Manning made good on it.

"Julius and I have spent a lot of time working on those particular routes, after practice, in practice," Manning said. "And that's one of the most rewarding parts of football, when you put that work in, off to the side and after practice, and it pays off for you in a game ... those two plays were certainly worth the hard work."

Thomas had just one career catch coming into this season, his third in the NFL, and he had been hurt on that one reception, no less. He even briefly considered giving up his dream of playing gridiron.

But this season, he broke Hall of Famer Shannon Sharpe's team record for tight ends by catching 12 touchdown passes and it was his emergence that freed up Manning's other targets — Demaryius Thomas, Eric Decker and Wes Welker, along with running back Knowshon Moreno — who all joined him with 10 or more touchdowns.

Thomas, who didn't play in the first match against the Patriots because of a knee injury, finished with six catches for 76 yards on Sunday, but none was longer — or bigger — than his 21-yarder.

"Third-and-17 was the play of the game," Elway said. "We had to pick it up, keep the chains moving, keep them off the field and not give them a chance and so that's where it was tremendous. The offensive line did a great job of protecting Peyton, Julius Thomas made a great catch dragging his feet on the sideline.

"But who knows where the game goes if we don't make that play? Those are the types of plays you have to make in playoff football to be able to advance."

And make the most of second chances.



AARON FAVILA/AP

Andy Murray rests in his chair during his second-round match against Vincent Millot at the Australian Open on Thursday. Murray was among the top-seeded players that avoided the worst heat.

NFL PLAYOFFS

New kids on the block

With renewed focus on the run, Pats' tight ends are blocking more, catching less

By HOWARD ULMAN
The Associated Press

R FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — ob Gronkowski and Aaron Hernandez were widely regarded as the top tight end duo in the NFL.

Michael Hoomanawanui and Matthew Mulligan are blocking in anonymity as their successors, helping pave the way for New England's return to the AFC championship game.

"The game, with the way it is now, no one ever talks about a blocking tight end," Patriots left guard Logan Mankins said Wednesday. "It is how many catches they have. The tight ends on our team have been vital to our running success."

The Patriots' ground attack is rolling — 267 and 234 yards in the last two games — as they head into Sunday's game at Denver that will determine whether they or the Broncos reach the Super Bowl.

New England won the first meeting between the teams this season, 34-31 in overtime in Foxborough on Nov. 24. Gronkowski caught a touchdown pass that day then went out with a season-ending

knee injury two weeks later. He already had missed the first six games while recovering from forearm and back surgeries and ended up playing

By the numbers

362

Number of combined catches for New England tight ends Aaron Hernandez and Rob Gronkowski.

53

Number of combined catches for New England tight ends Matthew Mulligan and Michael Hoomanawanui.

267

Number of rushing yards the Patriots gained last week in its AFC divisional playoff game against Indianapolis.

SOURCE: The Associated Press

just seven games.

Hernandez was arrested in late June, charged with first-degree murder. He has pleaded not guilty.

He and Gronkowski combined for 106 catches and 16 touchdowns last season. In their three seasons together, they totaled 362 receptions for 56 touchdowns.

The totals for the tight ends the Patriots

will use against the Broncos?

Just 37 receptions in four seasons for Hoomanawanui and 16 receptions and two touchdowns in five seasons for Mulligan.

"They've lost key players and you've got to find your strength as a team once you do that," Broncos defensive tackle Terrance Knighton said. "They lost Gronkowski. He was a big part of their offense. So they've got to find other ways to beat teams."

The Patriots' offensive system is broad enough to accommodate stylistic changes at different positions so they can adjust when personnel change, offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels said.

"Mike and Matt have been a very big part of what we're doing," he said. "I know that they may not

have the production in terms of catches in the passing game, but that certainly doesn't diminish their role that they play for us in the pass game. They definitely do a nice job in protection."

They're also a major part of the running game.

"They don't get much credit for it, but you're never going to get to the edge if your tight end can't block," Mankins said. "There are a lot of plays that we run right behind those guys so they've got to do a good job for our backs to have success."

It's not that Hoomanawanui and Mulligan can't or don't want to catch the ball.

"Who wouldn't?" Hoomanawanui said. "It's always nice if you can be a factor in the passing game and the running game, but (we'll do) whatever it takes to win and, lately for us, that's been running the ball."

The Patriots have backs with different styles. LeGarrette Blount is powerful, Steven Ridley is elusive, Shane Vereen is small and fast, and Brandon Bolden combines those attributes.

"When you have four talented running backs, it's a great opportunity to go out there and



New England Patriots (13-4)
at Denver Broncos (14-3)
AFN-Sports
9 p.m. Sunday CET
5 a.m. Monday JKT

showcase my skills as a blocker," Mulligan said, "because you know they're going to make you look good."

One of his two receptions this season was a 1-yard touchdown in a 30-23 win at Atlanta in the fourth game.

Hoomanawanui's only touchdown among his 12 catches was a spectacular one-handed grab for a 13-yard score in the 14th game. But the Patriots lost to the Miami Dolphins 24-20.

"I would have traded it for a win," he said.

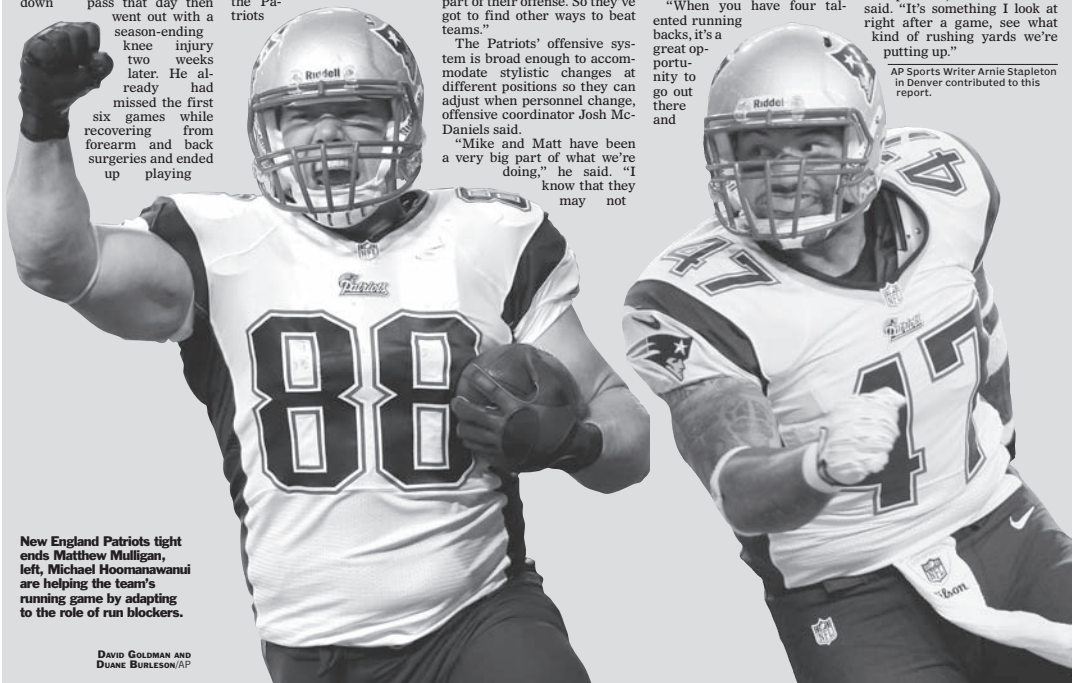
At least he finally got some recognition. Friends and family members still remind him of that catch. So did his former teammate at Illinois, Colts cornerback Vontae Davis. They saw each other last Saturday night when New England beat Indianapolis 43-22 in an AFC divisional-round game.

"It's something we definitely take pride in," Hoomanawanui said. "It's something I look at right after a game, see what kind of rushing yards we're putting up."

AP Sports Writer Arnie Stapleton in Denver contributed to this report.

New England Patriots tight ends Matthew Mulligan, left, Michael Hoomanawanui are helping the team's running game by adapting to the role of run blockers.

DAVID GOLDMAN AND
DAIANE BURLESON/AP



NFL PLAYOFFS

What's Harbaugh's deal? Its just winning

Emotional coach guides 49ers to their third straight NFC championship game

By JANIE McCauley
The Associated Press

Jim Harbaugh pirouetted in frustration following a personal foul on Dan Skuta. He got hit with his own unsportsmanlike conduct penalty for arguing following a catch by Vernon Davis that went to review before being ruled a touchdown.

And that was just last Sunday.

Harbaugh has been at his emotional best — or, to some, worst — with his cartoon-like faces and quirky sideline antics in leading San Francisco back to the NFC championship game for the third time in as many years since taking over as 49ers head coach in January 2011. On Davis' TD during Sunday's 23-10 win at Carolina, Harbaugh ran well onto the field during the play.

"I think Harbaugh gets away with murder myself," former Seahawks coach and ex-49ers assistant Mike Holmgren said. "If I ever did that it would be a penalty."

Harbaugh should be as charged up as ever come Sunday, when he faces off once more against the rival Seattle Seahawks in an NFC championship game featuring that familiar coaching sideshow with Pete Carroll. This time, there's a Super Bowl berth on the line.

'He's the kind of coach you want to win for. He's around, he gets it, he's been there.'

Phil Dawson
49ers kicker

now as it would have been then when people made a bigger deal out of it. So, irrelevant, irrelevant."

Sorry, not this week. There's no avoiding such chatter. Harbaugh has to expect that infamous phrase to come up often.

It dates back to their college days coaching in the then Pac-10 Conference. In 2009, Harbaugh and No. 25 Stanford ran up the score on 11th-ranked USC in a surprising 55-21 rout, even attempting a 2-point conversion with the game way out of reach — prompting Carroll's infamous "What's your deal?" when they met afterward at midfield.

Whatever their past or perceived differences, Harbaugh knows what to expect every time a Carroll-coached team takes the field.

"It's hard to get to this position," Harbaugh said. "Talking about a year of preparation and planning and offseason and training camp and games. And they did it better than anybody did it this entire season. So, a great task, great challenge ahead of us."

Place kicker Phil Dawson wanted to be part of the winning vibe after 14 mostly disappointing years with Cleveland. Nose tackle Glenn Dorsey left Kansas City to join a team with Harbaugh at the helm.

Even if Dorsey's first impressions of the coach left him shaking his head.

"I noticed what everybody else noticed: a coach

going crazy on the sideline having fun," Dorsey recalled. "Always pumped up and always getting his team hyped. He works hard, even now being on the inside seeing him every day and how he goes about doing his job, the enthusiasm that he has and the motivational stuff that he has, the knowledge that he has. He's a great coach."

Dawson appreciates how Harbaugh takes chances in the kicking game based on his trust in the veteran.

The 50-year-old Harbaugh, a 15-year NFL quarterback himself, regularly moves around the team plane to visit with players about football and life. He shares meals with rookies and veterans alike on occasion in the team cafeteria.

"He's the kind

of coach you want to win for," Dawson said.

"There's a special satisfaction with having a relationship with the head coach. Being a place kicker, on a

lot of teams the head coach never even speaks to the kicker. He's around, he gets it, he's been there. He's sat in those seats. I think it's probably one of the biggest reasons he's successful is his ability to communicate with the guys and relate to them on their level and be able to instill whatever it is he's trying to instill in a way that guys will receive it."

AP Sports Writer Tim Booth in Renton, Wash., contributed to this report.



**San Francisco 49ers (14-4)
at Seattle Seahawks (14-3)**
AFN-Sports
12:30 a.m. Monday CET
8:30 a.m. Monday JKT

San Francisco 49ers head coach Jim Harbaugh watches the scoreboard against the Carolina Panthers during the first half of their NFC divisional playoff game on Sunday in Charlotte, N.C.

GERRY BROOME/AP

Did you know

Jim Harbaugh is the first coach in the Super Bowl era to reach the NFC title game in each of his first three seasons.

SOURCE: The Associated Press

SPORTS



MCT photos

TAKE TWO

Peyton Manning very good at second chances

By ARNIE STAPLETON
The Associated Press

From rematches to revivals to redemption, it's not a good idea to bet against Peyton Manning when it comes to second chances. He has 97 touchdown throws since hooking up with Broncos executive John Elway in Denver two years ago after the Indianapolis Colts released him when neck troubles clouded his NFL future.

After dispatching San Diego in the playoffs on the anniversary of last year's crushing loss to Baltimore in eerily similar circumstances, Manning is one win from a shot at becoming the first quarterback to win Super Bowls with two franchises.

Standing in his way are Tom Brady and the New England Patriots, who beat the Broncos 34-31 in overtime in November.

The thing is, it's been six years since Manning lost a rematch to a team that beat him during the season. The Broncos lost just once at home this season, when they became the highest-scoring team in the Super Bowl era, propelled by Manning's record 55 touchdown throws and 5,447 yards through the air.

That was on Dec. 12, when they were upset by San Diego, a loss they avenged on Sunday by beating the

5 Consecutive victories for Peyton Manning in rematches. He has not lost to the same team twice in a row since 2007, when the Indianapolis Colts were beaten by the Chargers 23-21 at San Diego in November and 28-24 at home in the AFC wild-card playoffs.

Chargers 24-17.

The last time Manning lost twice in a row to the same team was in 2007, when the Colts lost 23-21 at San Diego in November and then dropped a 28-24 heartbreaker at home in the wild-card playoffs.

Since then, Manning has won five straight rematches, and it took a vintage performance Sunday to keep that streak going.

After controlling the game for 3½ quarters, the Broncos allowed 17 fourth-quarter points

after losing shutdown cornerback Chris Harris Jr. to a torn knee ligament.

The Broncos were facing third-and-17 from their 20 with three minutes left and Chargers quarterback Phillip Rivers loosening up his right arm on the sideline, ready for his chance to tie this one just like the Ravens had a year earlier on their way to a 38-35 victory in double overtime.

SEE TWO ON PAGE 29



**New England Patriots (13-4)
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Dodgers' Kershaw the first to average \$30 million

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No. 4 Michigan State rolls to 9th straight victory

College basketball, Page 25